Winning or losing media support for regime change: A comparative analysis of UK government media agenda building during the Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003 conflicts.

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A submission presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Glamorgan/Prifysgol Morgannwg for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

30 January 2013

Abstract

This study examines the means by which the UK government sought to win the support of the media in advance of taking military action in two separate conflicts in which regime change was the main government agenda and to which there was substantial internal domestic opposition. This opposition led to the necessity of winning the support of the media in order to influence public support in the lead-up to direct military action and to retain that support during the latter period and up to the cessation of formal military activities. Areas including overt and covert censorship and propaganda are examined in order to determine if they played any part in UK government media agenda building in the military actions being studied. The two conflicts examined are the Invasion of the Suez Canal Zone in Egypt in 1956 and the Iraq War of 2003, both of which are linked in that the military and political aims were regime change in the face of extensive international opposition, were without the fiat of a United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) and took place in the face of extensive domestic opposition. To overcome the third element required and effective media agenda building policy on behalf of the government in power. Previous academic work in this field has been weighted from the media's point of view, whereas this study examines media agenda building as a part of government and military policy which in itself is an integral part of the act of war. The findings show the conflicts within a media wishing to retain traditional journalistic objectivity and freedom of expression during a time of conflict when there are domestic and patriotic pressures to support the troops in the field and, as a *de facto* result, support the political agenda The findings also reveal the problems, changes and shifts in government media handling policy carried out in order to retain or win media support for UK armed interventions in both conflicts named here.

The methodology involved in the preparation of this dissertation involves a scrutiny of academic analysis of the events, investigation of primary source material on UK

government decision-making held at the National Archives, an investigation of contemporary diaries, autobiographies, interview recordings and memoirs of government and media personnel involved in both conflicts and, in the case of the Iraq 2003 episode, personal interviews with key government and media people involved.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to many people who have helped in the preparation of this dissertation. First of all, I acknowledge the help and support of my University of Glamorgan colleagues at the Learning and Resources Centre who responded swiftly, and promptly, to my demands of even the most obscure material from the British Library and other sources. Secondly, and a fervent thanks to modern email, I am grateful for the assistance for the staff of the Dwight D. Eisenhower and Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Libraries in the USA who helped to fill in gaps which, through UK rules, are not yet available in our own National Archives. But apart from that, I do acknowledge the assistance and professionalism of the National Archives staff at Kew and a computer system which is a boon to any academic researcher. Thirdly, electronic access apart, there is little substitute for poring over the personal papers and handwriting of key people involved in historical events to get a real feel of what was happening at the times I was investigating and my thanks go to the staff at the Bodleian Library, in Oxford, for access to the personal papers of William Clark and Lord Monckton, the librarians at the University of Southampton for access to the personal papers of Lord Mountbatten, King's College, London, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, for access to the Papers of the Suez Oral History Project and Chief Archivist Heather Yasamee, at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, for a privileged glimpse into papers not yet released to the National Archives. Fourthly, I give thanks to David Stevens, at the Ministry of Defence, who helped to arrange personal interviews with MoD staff involved in both the Iraq conflicts and Richard Sambrook, of the BBC, who paved my way to interviewing his BBC colleagues who covered both of these wars.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to my former Director of Studies at the University of Glamorgan, Professor John Beynon, who graciously took on a geriatric PhD student and let him loose on history, and my supervisors Dr Vian Bakir and Dr Gill Allard who rigorously channelled my often misplaced enthusiasm into far more productive paths than I ever would have imagined.

Abbreviations

ABC – American Broadcasting Company

ACDS – Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff

ANA – Arab News Agency

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

CIC – Coalition Information Centre

CNN – Cable News Network

CGS – Chief of the General Staff (formerly CIGS – Chief of the Imperial General Staff)

FO – Foreign Office (now FCO – Foreign and Commonwealth Office)

FTU – Forward Transmission Unit

GCHQ – Government Communication Headquarters

IRD - Information Research Department

JIB – Joint Information Bureau

JIC – Joint Intelligence Committee

MI6 – Military Intelligence Department 6 (actually Secret Intelligence Service)

MOD – Ministry of Defence

MP – Member of Parliament

MRT – Mobile Reporting Team

NA – National Archives (formerly the Public Records Office – PRO)

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

PM – Prime Minister

PPD – Prepared Presidential Directive

PPS – Principal Private Secretary

PSYOPS – Psychological Operations

SACEUR – Supreme Allied Commander Europe

SHAPE – Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe

SUEZOHP – Suez Oral History Project

UK – United Kingdom

UNPROFOR – United Nations Protecting Force

UNSCR – United Nations Security Council Resolution

USA – United States of America (often shortened to US)

WMD – Weapons of Mass Destruction

Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction.

Governments at war or planning for war need to garner support from those who elected them: they need to build an agenda which is calculated to win a majority within the country which supports the war aims and objectives. Elected politicians do have their own agenda, which may come from their personal political beliefs, their support for party policy or, simply the need to gain power. Non-elected media moguls have their agendas too – support for one political party, opposition to another, the need to profit from publication and, perhaps, the desire to force change in the political agenda of a party for personal or conglomerate gain.

In terms of these "dynamics" it is intended to look at the construction of a political agenda mainly from the government point of view, in other words how the UK government planned its media-handling policy in time of conflict in order favourably to influence the media and win support for its war aims and to justify its taking military action. In both the cases studied there was substantial internal UK opposition to taking military action and each government had to put in place a media-handling mechanism to win support for its political and military agenda. Therefore this study sets out to assess the current literature on agenda setting and agenda building in order to consider and evaluate existing knowledge and ideas relevant to the dissertation title:

Winning or losing media support for regime change: A comparative analysis of UK government media agenda building during the Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003 conflicts.

Although there has been much published on *media* agenda setting or agenda building, this study concentrates on how the UK *government* attempted to win support during the above Middle East campaigns, be that support from the media, people within the UK, the international community or other stakeholders in these momentous events. In Chapter 2. This study will expand on the theme of agenda building and the nature of the material published.

Schlesinger makes the point that media sociology has largely focused on how media organizations, especially those producing news, have made use of sources of information.[1] Kuhn, writing on the mediatisation of political leadership, says that with the modern tendency to personalise political debate political parties have become involved in a permanent campaign involving image projection and news management.[2] Taking these two points on the political-media interaction, this study will focus on government agenda building and how the UK government has structured its media handling campaign in order to attempt to favourably influence the print media, radio and television. In terms of a diagnostic framework, the study will be framed as *agenda building* rather than as *agenda setting* for reasons which will be examined, reasoned and explained in Chapter 2.

This approach does not follow the "mediacentric" path as criticised by Schlesinger as an analysis of source behaviour either by interpreting what sources do by a reading of the media content or by deriving conclusions from accounts given by practitioners of journalism of their interactions with their sources.[3] Instead, it seeks to achieve a more balanced approach by examining the processes used by UK governments in 1956 and 2003 in attempting to manage the news through the *agenda building* process. The source material includes declassified government documents, memoirs and other published material from UK government and military personnel involved in formulating media-handling policy in the conflicts as well as interviews carried out with key government players and media sources. This material therefore is hopefully balanced through reviewing published academic sources on media coverage of conflict, the accounts of media personnel involved in the actual conflict reporting and editing and taking additional oral evidence from BBC executives and reporters involved in the Iraq 2003 war. Through the methodology outlined in Chapter 3, this study will explore how the UK government

[1] Schlesinger, Philip, 'Rethinking the Sociology of Journalism', in Ferguson, Marjorie (ed) *Public Communication: The New Imperatives* (London: Sage, 1993), p.62.
[2] Kuhn, Raymond, *Politics and the Media in Britain* ((Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.204.
[3] Ibid, p72.

attempted to influence and manipulate the media in order to further its military/political aims.

There is, of course, the third part of the triangle, the public and other stakeholders both the UK government and the media were trying to influence. This study is government agenda focused and will try to break free of the perception that agenda creation is a process founded on the notion that media leaders believe that they are representing "the people" and may assemble the agenda they think people should consider, that is to say news and feature coverage which may well be designed to support their own political ambitions.

Media coverage can bring about "dramatic shifts" in political and military decision-making. For example, the coverage of a dead American airman being dragged through a warlord's camp in Somalia in 1993 and the Serb mortar attacks on Sarajevo's market on 28 August, 1995.[4] In the Sarajevo attack 38 people were killed and the widely publicised incident gave the excuse for a change in tactics from a peacekeeping role to a more aggressive military stance, with NATO two days later launching the biggest and most sustained air attack in the alliance's 46-year-old history. For the first time in the four years of war in the Balkans, the West intervened with all the forces at its disposal to force an end to the conflict.[5] General Sir Rupert Smith, then commanding the UN Protecting Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia later revealed that he had received recent authority to use all the forces available to him when the first opportunity arose.[6] The world-wide distribution of

[4] Taylor, Philip M., 'War and the Media', *A keynote address delivered at a conference on military-media relationships* (Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, 1995), p.1. Also in Bellamy, Christopher, *Knights in White Armour: The New Art of War and Peace* (London: Pimlico, 1997), p.11. On p.158 Bellamy refers to the USA withdrawing its troop from Somalia saying "If the intervening forces are very sensitive to casualties it may be still possible to make them withdraw, even if they are immensely powerful." Agguire refers to the realpolitik of the situation with President Clinton deciding through a new Prepared Presidential Directive (PPD25) that the US would only intervene in future only in situations that could be to its benefit and with a clear exit strategy(Agguire, Mariano, 'Humanitarian Intervention & US Hegemony: A Reconceptualization', in Vanaik,Achin & Ali, Tariq (eds) *Selling US Wars* (Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire: Arris Books, 2007), p.197.

[5] Bellamy, p.119.

[6] Smith, General Sir Rupert, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), pp364-365.

pictures and other news coverage of the mortar shelling and civilian casualties provided him with that opportunity. Smith thought deeply about how to handle the media; he saw them as an integral part of his military planning in winning support of the wider public through expressing and displaying the story.[7] This aspect will be examined in this dissertation, especially the broadcasting and publishing pictures of such incidents by the media and government in order to influence a change in policy.

There is a wide range of well-established literature exploring the problems with the concept of shaping government policy. Weaver and Elliott refer to the "selective processes and news judgements of the journalists" having a significant part in this process.[8] Similarly, Entman and Herbst also refer to the "shaping" of mass opinion through framing issues in particular ways with the media limiting certain types of information in their reporting in order to influence mass opinion.[9] Robinson, in examining the alleged CNN effect (defined as the effect of dramatic real-time television imagery actually driving military policy[10]) and its reported influence of government agenda building, states that policy makers and elite groups do not rely primarily upon opinion polls as evidence of public opinion.[11] Rather they rely on "perceived public opinion that in turn is largely formed by the media.[12] Yet in their examination of the relationships between political and media institutions Himelboim and Limor cite recent criticism of the economic and financial aspects of media organisations, viewing these as a threat to media freedom and disturbing the delicate balance between media, society and the state.[13] This again can have a negative impact on government agenda building through subjective reporting,

[7] Ibid, p.391
[8] Weaver. D, and Elliot. SM, 'Who Sets the Agenda for the Media? A Study in Agenda Building,' Journalism Quarterly (Vol 2, No 1 1985), p.94.
[9] Entman, Robert & Herbst, Susan, 'Reframing Public Opinion as We Have Known It', in Bennett, W. Lance & Entman, Robert M (eds) *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.207.
[10] Thussu, Daya Kishan & Freedman, Des (eds), *War and the Media* (London: Sage, 2003), p.104.

[12] Robinson, Piers, *The CNN Effect: The myth of news, foreign policy and interventions* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.3.
[13] Himmelboim, Itai & Limor, Yehiel, 'Media perception of freedom of the press: A comparative international analysis of 242 codes of ethics', *Journalism* (Vol. 9, No. 3, 2008) pp.235-236.

weighed in favour of a media group's vested interests which may run contrary to those of a democratically elected government.

There is also the element of trust to consider – trust in the media and trust in what a government has to say. Bakir and Barlow quote a 2006 BBC/Reuters/Media Centre poll which reveals that 64 per cent of those polled in the UK disagree that the media reports all sides of a story and 43 per cent disagreeing that the media report news accurately.[14] Institutions, too, are distrusted with numerous surveys over the past decade suggesting that industry officials, government officials and journalists rank lowest on the trust scale.[15] This element of "trust" will be examined in the empirical chapters, analysing government/media relationships and how these relationships could apply to agenda building and, in turn, winning public trust and support.

In terms of winning public trust, the effect of public opinion on media content should be considered. Media analyst Roy Greenslade refers to the "myth" surrounding the 1956 Suez conflict in which the minority of newspapers which opposed the war were said to have suffered "catastrophic sales losses from which they never recovered."[16] Greenslade reflects that examination of the evidence shows that there was, in fact, no lasting circulation loss in these newspapers, pointing towards a contention that these newspapers retained the trust of their readers.[17] During the 2003 Iraq War public opinion may well have given majority backing to the coalition domestically in the USA and been evenly split for and against in the United Kingdom, but adverse public opinion abroad had little effect on the USA and UK media agendas. This will be reviewed in the empirical chapters but there is evidence from Kumar and others that the mainstream media have a long history of

[14] Bakir, Vian & Barlow, David, 'The Age of Suspicion,' in Bakir, Vian & Barlow, David M. (eds). *Communication in the Age of Suspicion: Trust and the Media* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.5.
[15] Ibid, p.4
[16] Greenslade, Roy, *Press Gang:. How newspapers make profits from propaganda* (London: Macmillan, 2003), p.130.
[17] Ibid.

supporting the efforts of their own governments during war.[18] Outside the domestic arena the picture may be different and Hiebert quotes a poll carried out by Gallop International in the weeks leading up to the war. Forty countries were targeted; overall less than nine per cent supported a US- led war without UN approval and polls from 27 of the countries showed more than 80 per cent opposed it.[19]

Many studies examine the professional journalists' claims to be the official interpreters of critical incidents through their objectivity and role as detached observers.[20] Jailed fraudster and former "press baron" Conrad Black, who once controlled 600 newspapers throughout the world, said in a moment of refreshing honesty: "If the small guy's guardian is the media, the small guy is in bigger trouble than I thought."[21] Add to this the 1998 statement of his chief executive officer who bluntly rejected the right of editors to control the editorial content of their publications saying: "The buck stops with the ownership. I am responsible for meeting payroll; therefore I will determine what the papers say, and how they are going to be run."[22] Hargreaves refers to the aphorism attributed to press baron Lord Northcliffe that "news is something somebody somewhere doesn't want printed. All the rest is advertising."[23]

This is a point Curran and Seaton also examine, taking issue with the interpretation of some historians that the press barons such as Northcliffe failed to persuade people to vote for their right-wing political projects as evidence that these proprietors exercised no significant political power. Curran and Seaton contend that the proprietors' main impact lay in the way in which their newspapers selectively

[18] Kumar, Deepa, 'Media, War and Propaganda: Strategies of Information Management During the 2003 Iraq War',*Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* (Vol. 3, No.1 March 2006), p.48.
[19] Hiebert, Ray, 'Public Relations and propaganda in framing the Iraq war: a preliminary review', *Public Relations Review* (Vol. 29, Issue 3, September 2003), p.253.
[20] Wall, Melissa A. & Bicket, Douglas, 'The "Baghdad Broadcasting Corporation": US conservatives take aim at the British News media', *Journalism* (Vol. 9, No. 2, 2008), p.125."
[21] Klaehn, Jeffrey, 'Behind the Invisible Curtain of Scholarly Criticism: Revisiting the propaganda model,' *Journalism Studies,* (Vol.4. No.3, 2003) p.366.
[22] McMurty, John (1998) *Unequal freedoms: the global market as an ethical system*, (Toronto: Garamond Press,) p.199.
[23] Hargreaves, Ian, *Journalism: Truth or dare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.178.

represented the world, strengthening the mainly conservative prejudices of their readers and reinforcing opposition, particularly within the middle class, to progressive change.[24] How news is "selectively" presented is a key area of this study both from the media handling policy of successive UK governments and the reaction to that policy from the media. "Selective presentation" is also the subject of the Mowlana *et al* edited study of the 1991 Iraq War the theme of the essays contained in their collection which contains contributions from many countries in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, focusing on the triumph of image over reality and reason.[25] Sainath, in his essay in this collection makes the point that opinion in India was mainly against the war, highlighted by an editorial in the *Times of India* the day fighting broke out. Titled *Pax Americana* it criticised the USA for pushing the world to a needless war that could have been prevented had Washington been serious about a peaceful settlement.[26] Yet, in terms of "selective" presentation, Sainath points out that no Indian journalists received Saudi visas to cover the conflict, those already in the conflict area were subject to heavy censorship and journalists in India trying to put an objective face on their reports had to rely on footage, all from Western, and mainly supportive of the war, sources.[27] This leads to a dilemma in the eyes of the viewer when voice-over conflicts with image and, with the power of the image, the voice over may be ignored.[28] Therefore, the image may prompt the viewer to accept the "good news", that is to say the justification for the war, against the "bad news", the voice-over which may have editorial criticism of justification for the conflict. There is an old press maxim that "one picture equals a thousand words".

Jonathan Powell, Prime Minister Tony Blair's Chief of Staff, also makes a point about "presentation", drawing comparison with the Florentine writer and statesman Niccolo Machiavelli. Powell wrote: "Machiavelli did not have to deal with the British

[24] Curran, James & Seaton, Jean, *Power without Responsibility: The press, broadcasting and new media in Britain* (London: Routledge, 2003), p.47.
[25] Mowlanda, Hamid, Gerbner, George & Schiller, Herbert I. (eds), *Triumph of the Image: The Media's War in the Persian Gulf – A Global Perspective* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992).
[26] Sainath, P., 'The New World *Odour; The Indian Experience',* in Mowlana et al, p.70.
[27] Sainath, p.71.
[28] Gerbner, George, 'Persian Gulf War: The Movie', in Mowlana et al, p.246.

tabloid press or 24 hour news, but he was well aware of the importance of presentation. He advises a wise prince, even in the sixteenth century 'that it is necessary, indeed, to put a good colour on this nature, and to be skilful in simulating and dissembling.'"[29] Presentation can be taken as having high importance in agenda building, whether making the maximum of "good news" to win support in in damage limitation when a government has to announce "bad news."

Concerning "bad news, in his research into the output of the Reuters news agency – print, TV and radio – during the 2003 Iraq war, Palmer quotes a senior Reuters editor that "bad news" is more attractive to the media than good news.[30] Taking this point further Allan, in his examination of the "objective" nature of news reporting contends that while journalists may present a news account as *objective* and *impartial*, it may instead be understood to be providing an ideological *construction* of contending truth claims about reality.[31] Allan points out that historically that in the years immediately following the First World War in Europe there arose a disillusionment with "official channels" of information and state propaganda campaigns leading to a desire by journalists for more "scientific" methods of reporting the facts, distinguishing "facts" from "values" if their newspapers were to be regarded as free arbiters of the truth.[32]

McNair in *Images of the Enemy* examines the language and visuals of TV news discourse which presented the Cold War between the West and the Soviet Union as objective and impartial despite the fact that the versions shown were open to challenge from a range of credible sources.[33] That these versions may have been overly influenced by "official sources" is also a theme to be analysed in the two

[29] Powell, Jonathan, *The New Machiavelli: How to Wield Power in the Modern World* (London:Vintage, 2011) p.189
[30] Palmer, Michael, 'News: ephemera, data, artefacts and…quality control – Iraq now and then', *Journalism* (Vol. 4, No. 4, 2003), p.473
[31] Allan, Stuart, *News Culture* (Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press, 2004), p.4.
[32] Ibid, p.22.
[33] McNair, Brian, 'From Control to Chaos: Towards a New Sociology of Journalism', *Media, Culture & Society* (Vol. 25, 2003), p.547.

empirical chapters, examining the principle that both the UK government and the media have fairly exposed the public to competing ideas in order that they, the public, could determine truth by assessing diverse opinions in the true spirit of freedom of speech and the right to know, according to the enlightenment model of rational discourse.[34]

On the other hand rational discourse may have played no part in both the Eden and Blair governments' attempts to win media support and thus that of the public the media were feeding. This dissertation will examine both Eden and Blair agenda-building strategies to see what methods they employed to win favourable influence and to compare and contrast their failures and successes. It is hoped, by analysing these two case studies, that there will be an original contribution to academic research in, specifically, the field of government agenda building and that a road map may be laid out for future academic work when all the remaining government papers of the Suez Crisis are eventually released to the National Archives and are made available for researchers and similarly all the government papers of the Blair administration concerning Iraq 2003, none of which have yet been released.

[34] Tuchman, Gaye, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), pp.165-166.

Chapter 2. Review of literature

2.1. Background

The cases of agenda building to be examined are those of the UK governments in power during the conflicts in Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003, focusing on government attempts to favourably influence the media into supporting government policy and military and political objectives. The similarities between these two events is that they were wars of attempted regime change, the United Kingdom was split on whether or not to support the government and neither conflicts had United Nations support. Therefore the governments in the UK in 1956 and 2003 had to seek effective ways to gain media and public support for their agenda. It is the analysis of these ways that forms the subject of the two case studies examined.

The various theories on agenda building and agenda setting, as set out here in Section 2.2**,** have been studied with the intention of finding and developing a means of comparative analysis that could best serve the research purpose. Section 2.3 looks at how a government may set out to form a media agenda building policy and analyses the various obstacles it may face in attempting to win support for its political agenda. Section 2.4 examines various means of political communication which impact on an agenda-building process and Section 2.5 comments on how a government may try to influence various stakeholder groups (publics) in its agenda-building process.

Section 2.6 reviews propaganda, public diplomacy and other means a government may employ to win support for its wartime policy objectives and how this may conflict with a media agenda-building policy. Section 2.7 continues this theme of government “control” and looks at manipulation concerns between the media and government. Section 2.8 examines subject of media dependency on official information release and the risks to the media of a dependency culture. Section 2.9 follows up this line of research to highlight the pressures on objective reporting and

Section 2.10 reviews the debate over media influence and its perceived effect on public opinion. The chapter ends with a Summary in 2.11.

2.2. Agenda building as a tool for analysis

Having now raised the subject of agenda building, it is necessary to clarify the meaning for the purposes of this study. Cobb and Elder define an *agenda* as *a set of topics that receive attention from a person, organisation, the public at large, media or government officials.*[35] Taking this further in terms of the title of this dissertation, both authors go on to define an institutional, governmental or formal agenda as a set of items explicitly set up for the active and serious consideration of authoritative decision-makers.[36]

Manheim described agenda building as "the process by which issues emerge as legitimate concerns of the polity and its policymakers.[37] The use of the word "emerge" may unconsciously introduce a sense of passivity and reaction whereas proactivity and policy offensive may well be the main factors in *agenda building,* it could be contended. In this study the focus is on examining the UK government's positive and proactive measures to court media support in time of conflict through *agenda building* with the accent on government activity whereas the majority or work in examining government/media interaction in this field has concentrated on the media side. It is hoped, therefore, to tease out some original findings from the research on how the UK government in two conflicts attempted to win media support for its political and military actions.

On examining the literature on the two main approaches in this field - agenda setting and agenda building, much of the published literature appears to be mediacentric. Rogers and Dearing describe *agenda building* as "a process through

[35] Cobb, R.W.& Elder, Charles. D., *Participation in American Politics: The Dynamics of Agenda-Building,* John Hopkins University Press, (1972), p.20.
[36] Ibid, p.86.
[37] Manheim, J.B. "A Model of Agenda Dynamics," *Communication Yearbook*, London (1987), p.499.

which the policy agendas of political elites are influenced by a variety of factors, including the media and public agendas."[38] Perloff states that news stories frequently set the agenda or influence people's beliefs about what constitute the most important problems facing society.[39] Manheim adds that it is useful to think less of agenda setting or agenda building *per se* than of a comprehensive system of interactive agendas. Such a system is made up of three distinct agendas, those of the media, the public and the policymakers. Each has its own characteristic internal dynamics, and each is linked to the others by one or more informational, behavioural, or institutional bridges."[40]

The media can have its own agenda, often linked to the political or commercial prejudices of individual owners or proprietors. The former owner of the *Daily Express* Max Aitken (later Lord Beaverbrook) took over the publication in 1910 after a senior Conservative politician told the impoverished owner who wished to sell it "Max Aitken is enormously rich. He knows nothing about newspapers and is not interested in them. But he wants to have political power and will be glad of a newspaper that will back him."[41] Beaverbrook actually became a very hands-on proprietor, dictating editorial policy as did a later "press baron" Robert Maxwell, a Labour M.P. who bought the *Daily Mirror* group*,* relishing the role he thought his papers would bring him in politics.[42] These are extreme examples of media proprietors dictating the agenda, but in a more modern examination of the interplay between government and media Taylor underlines the proposition that in the modern information era the media have become participants in war, and are no longer simple observers.

[38] Rogers, E.M. &Dearing, J.W. "Agenda-Setting Research: Where has it been? Where is it going?" *Communication Year Book 11,* London (1998), p.556. In contrast, they describe *agenda setting* as "a process through which the mass media communicate the relative importance of various issues and events to the public." This study focuses on agenda building as a more relevant tool.
[39] Perloff, Richard M.,*The Dynamics of Persuasion* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2003), p.309.
[40] Manheim.JB, 'A Model of Agenda Dynamics,' *Communication Yearbook* (London, 1987), p.499.
[41] Seymour-Ure, Colin, *Prime Ministers and the Media: Issues of Power and Control* (London: Oxford, 2003), p.106.
[42] Ibid, pp.106-107.

These are examples of media owners with their own political agenda. However this study is more concerned with how a government forms and builds up its own agenda in order to win support for its political and military policies. Although the chosen method of analysis here is "agenda building" the dissertation also looks at literature on *agenda* setting, defined by Dearing *et al* as the process of an on-going competition among issue proponents to gain the attention of the media professionals, the public and the policy elites.[43] This suggests that agenda setting is in a constant state of flux and in a reactive/proactive symbiosis between these issue proponents. Graber distinguishes between *agenda setting*, which is the process of identifying and advocating social problems for inclusion on public and governmental agendas, and *agenda building*, or efforts to *influence* the interpretation and prioritising of these problems.[44] It is this concept of "influencing" or attempting to influence which leads to looking at *agenda building* rather than *agenda setting.* Although Prime Ministers Sir Anthony Eden and Tony Blair operated in different media eras there is a commonality of intent in that both had to overcome substantial internal UK government and public doubts on the "right" of taking military action and regime change in order to win support for their political and military policies. Agenda building was crucial to this in terms of "winning support" and provides a common template in which to compare the actions of the two leaders. Agenda building may not have been called that in Admiral Lord Nelson's time, but his flag signal to the British fleet before the Battle of Trafalgar "England expects every man will do his duty" was calculated to win the support of his sailors.[45] Similarly Martin Luther's speech at the Diet of Worms on 18 April 1521 in which he said: "Here stand I. I can do no other. God help me. Amen" clearly stated his position and was surely calculated to reinforce his own agenda of religious reform.[46] As Thomson points out on his work on mass persuasion in history we do not know how many people were

[43] Dearing, James W. & Rogers, Everett M, *Agenda Setting,* (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 1996), pp. 1-2.
[44] Smith, Jackie, McCarthy, John D., McPhail, Clark, Augustin, Boguslaw, "From Protest to Agenda Building: Description Bias in Media Coverage of Protest Events in Washington, D.C., *Social Forces*, June 2001, Vol. 79, Issue 4, p.1397.
[45] *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964) p.152.
[46] Jay, Anthony(ed), *The Oxford Dictionary of Political Quotations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) p.234.

influenced by figures such as Luther but we know that large number was and that attitudinal change was considerable.[47]

Weaver and Elliot postulate that the agenda-building process [in the case of this study that of the UK government] is more concerned with how issues originate, or how subjects of news coverage become issues, rather than the with the media-audience relationship studied so often by agenda-setting researchers. Yet, in the case of positive government agenda building, the "origin" will lie in the policy initiative which will become an issue for the media because the government puts it on their agenda to involve the media and the public. Certainly, although a government may plan its policy agenda and its media/public communications strategy with care, yet variables can always take a hand and have a major influence on the subsequent media agenda. Here, the selective processes and news judgements of the journalists also play a significant part in shaping this agenda.[48]

In terms of how governments formulate an agenda, in particular in reference to the proposed area of study as outlined in the introduction, it was necessary to look for a template which would provide the better framework for comparisons – agenda setting or agenda building. In reflecting on which framework the UK government formulation of media policy during the lead-up and actual fighting during the Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003 crises would sit more comfortably in order to make an intellectual and valid comparison, the answer, it is suggested, should be agenda building rather than agenda setting. The former, as it is hoped will be demonstrated, forms a more suitable tool for winning support for the UK government's media

[47] Thomson, Oliver, *Mass Persuasion in History* (Edinburgh: Paul Harris Publishing, 1977), p.9.
[48] Weaver. D, and Elliot. SM, 'Who Sets the Agenda for the Media? A Study in Agenda Building,' *Journalism Quarterly* (Vol. 2, No 1 1985), p.94. It is also worth considering the cost factor as outlined by Shaw (Shaw, Chris, 'TV News: why more is less', *British Journalism Review* {Vol. 14, No. 2, 2003], p.63. Writing of TV coverage of Iraq 2003, he states that the really expensive element of TV news is getting reporters and cameras to the scene of the stories and the pictures back to base. Thereafter it is relatively cheap to edit them into programmes, repacking and post producing to recycle them over and over again. As a result news gathering has become the main victim of cost cutting.

policy agenda through the key concept of "influencing" rather than merely "including" on that agenda.

In terms of government agenda building in general, examined from the point of the government and not from the point of the media, Schlesinger makes the point that media sociology has largely focused on how media organizations, especially those producing news, have made use of sources of information, rather than looking at how the sources (in the case of this study, UK governments) have used their power to define and manage the flow of information - in other words, how they set about building their own agenda in the media through the provision and supply of that information on which the media may come to over rely on.[49] Carlson makes the same point when he draws on a wide body of research (including Hall et al., 1978; Glasgow Media Group, 1976; Herman and Chomsky, 1988) in that media often have that over-reliance on official sources.[50] In that context Corner quotes Habermas' requirements made upon discourse that 'participants must mean what they say' adding that this rule might immediately render a good deal of political communication suspect.[51] In this Corner may be specifically referring to 'propaganda' and the concept of 'spin', both of which, he says, carry a sense of deceitfulness.[52]

Political communication, according to Gurevitch and Blumler, falls "lamentably short" when considering comparative communication analysis.[53] They make the point that the literature on political parties is rich in analytical material but that there is no such tradition in comparative political communications. This includes politicians' efforts to secure positive coverage.[54]

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[49] Blumler, p.62.
[50] Carlson, Matt, 'Order versus access: news search engines and the challenge to traditional journalistic roles', *Media, Culture & Society* (London: Sage, 2007), p.1017.
[51] Corner, John, 'Mediated politics, promotional culture and the idea of 'propaganda', *Media, culture and society* (London: Sage, 2007), p.673.
[52] Ibid, p.673.
[53] Esser, Frank & Pfetsch, Barbara. 'State of the Art of Comparative Political Communication Research'. On Esser & Pfetsch (eds), *Comparing Political Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.340-341.
[54] Ibid.

On this subject of agenda building, Kuhn, in his 2007 study, says that political actors are constantly trying to shape the media agenda for their own partisan purposes, 'a process known as agenda building.' [55] McCoombs (2004), reflecting on the various factors affecting a media agenda, points to public relations and political campaigns intent on influencing the media agenda in order to then shape the public agenda.[56] Taleb (2004) in his examination of media coverage of international conflicts speculates that it is more interesting to examine the influence of the political establishment on the media's orientations rather than the other way around.[57] Also in 2004. Sarikakis refers to the "dynamic relationship of the media industries and the state" in the United Kingdom and the indisputable importance of the role of the media in the political life of the country.[58] She also refers to the complex relationship between the media and government, a relationship which is not always straightforward and poses the question as to why governments are so interested in the media.[59] This question will be tackled, within the framework of the empirical chapters.

The weight of Sarikakis' work focuses on the media side of the relationship from its historical development in the UK, through to the contemporary media system in Britain.[60] This dissertation, while taking into account the historical development of the *media* between 1956 and 2003, will attempt to redress the perceived existing imbalance in research by focusing on *government* agenda building and will look at political/media communications links in time of conflict, for example in government media-handling policy, the allocation of reporter places with military units and how the government and military organise media briefings and the media's response to these briefings. The cases to be examined are the UK governments in power during

[55] Kuhn, p.26
[56] McCoombs, Maxwell, *Setting the agenda: the mass media and public opinion* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2004), pp.98-99.
[57] Taleb, B.A., *The Bewildered Herd: Media Coverage of International Conflicts & Public Opinion* (New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2004), p.2.
[58] Sarikakis, Katharine, *British Media in a Global Era* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.37.
[59] Sarikakis, p.38.
[60] Ibid, p.2.

the Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003 crises, in order to focus on government attempts to manipulate the media. Seymour-Ure, in his examination of British press and broadcasting since 1945 writes that at the end of the 1945 war there was probably a belief that the British government did not have media policies and that the perception was that a "free press" meant a press free from government control and shaped purely by market forces.[61]

Whether or not that still held in the second half of the 20th century is a fruitful area of study and impacts on research for this dissertation. In order to examine, therefore, any area of government control what follows here is a synthesis of academic approaches to the theory of government media agenda building in particular relating to the two areas of conflict defined in the dissertation title.

2.3 Problematising the notion of agenda building

In a more recent study than Schlesinger's 1993 work, Thussu and Freedman (2003) confirm his observations. In referring to the role of the mainstream media in reporting conflict, they raise the point for discussion that in the eyes of many media professionals and liberal commentators the journalists are "impartial and independent monitors of military conduct able and willing to shrug off ideological and organizational restrictions to keep a watchful eye on the activities of military combatants".[62] In a similar vein Carlson refers to journalists grounding their work in a belief that they are providing impartial, objective presentations of reality to their readers, listeners or viewers.[63] Chapman makes the observation that in their role as the fourth estate, newspapers acted as a watchdog on government and formed a crucial element in the process of shaping public opinion.[64] Philo, pointing to substantial research work done by the Glasgow University Media Group refers to

[61] Seymour-Ure, Colin, *The British Press and Broadcasting since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996). P.227.
[62] Thussu, Daya Kishan and Freedman, Des (eds), *War and the Media* (London: Sage, 2003), p.5.
[63] Carlson, Matt, 'Order versus access: news search engines and the challenge to traditional journalistic roles', *Media, Culture & Society* (Vol. 29, No. 6, 2007), p.1015.
[64] Chapman, Jane, *Comparative Media History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), p.7.

the "illusion" of balance in news reporting and restates previous criticism of broadcasters' claims to objectivity and impartiality when "the news was actually reproducing the assumptions of the powerful about what is important, necessary and possible within it".[65]

This dissertation is an examination of this "illusion," which is common to how in both Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003 government media-handling policy was carried out, created a perception of media objectivity and impartiality which helped both governments to veil their intent of regime change.

In contrast, Forgette and Morris (2006), in examining much of the recent empirical research into *High-Conflict Television News and Public Opinion,* say that the media's negative influence on institutional trust has been overstated in many cases and they pose the question "Do cynical viewers merely choose to watch high conflict news, or does high conflict news create a more cynical public?"[66] Their investigation relates specifically to the U.S. media, but some of the questions they pose on the interactions between politicians and the media can be directed at UK government/media relationships and conflicting agendas. Chapman, on the effect of television news, reflects that TV coverage clearly influences the public agenda for issues, giving as an example the coverage of the Chernobyl nuclear accident in Germany in 1986 when this coverage "clearly affected" public concern about the energy supply.[67] Taleb, specifically writing on media coverage of conflicts, remarks that the media has become so integrated in daily human life that it is "practically unthinkable" that a society can imagine itself existing without it, but adds the caveat that although the media both informs and entertains, it lately (pre-2004) has become to do both at the same time.[68] This is a particularly pertinent observation

[65] Philo, Greg, 'Can discourse analysis successfully explain the content of media and journalistic practice?', *Journalism Studies* (Vol. 8, No. 2, 2007), p.177.
[66] Forgette, Richard & Morris, Jonathan S., 'High-Conflict Television News and Public Opinion', *Political Research Quarterly* (Vol. 59, No. 3, 2006), p.447.
[67] Chapman, p.245.
[68] Taleb, p.4.

with regard to television coverage of the 2003 Iraq conflict, which will be examined in the relevant empirical chapter.

Examples of academic writing on government agenda building are, as Schlesinger contends, hard to find and it is hoped that this dissertation will, in some way, help to amend that situation. Zhang and Cameron's analysis of the Chinese government's attempts to counter opposition and win support in the USA is one of a few academic articles available.[69] The public relations campaign commissioned by the Chinese government included a tour of Chinese culture in nine American cities, a China Disabled Peoples Arts Performing Troupe, the Chinese President Jiang Zemin meeting media groups and a visit to Hawaii by the North Sea Fleet of the Chinese Navy, all this calculated to "present a genuine, brand new image of China before the American people."[70] However, the analysis by Zhang and Cameron read: "Negative coverage of China was found to be significantly more frequent than positive, balanced or neutral coverage."

Another example is Walters and Walters' analysis of Democratic Party agenda building in the 1992 Presidential campaign, showing the organizers' determination to be in the driving seat of their own campaign and not allow the media to run the agenda.[71] An example of the failure of official agenda building can be seen in the reporting of civilian casualties caused in the 1991 Iraq War by American missiles when CNN's Peter Arnett, reporting from Baghdad as the missiles landed, was accused in U.S. Congress of giving "a demented dictator a propaganda mouthpiece to over 100 nations" and, for reporting the same event, the BBC's John Simpson was denounced in Parliament as working for "BBC Baghdad".[72] In writing of this

[69] Zhang, Juyan & Cameron, Glenn, 'China's agenda building and image polishing in the US: assessing an international public relations campaign,' *Public Relations Review*, Volume 29, Issue1 (2002)**,** pp.2-19.
[70] Zhang, Juyan & Cameron, Glenn, 'China's agenda building and image polishing in the US.: assessing an international public relations campaign', *Public Relations Review* (Vol. 29, Issue 1, 2002), p.14.
[71] Walters, T.N., Walters L.M., and Gray, Roger, 'Agenda Building in the 1992 Presidential Campaign,' *Public Relations Review* (Vol.22, Issue 1, 1996, pp9-24),
[72] Evans, Harold, 'Propaganda versus Professionalism', *British Journalism Review* (Vol.15, No.1, 2004), p.36

Harold Evans, a former Editor of the *Sunday Times,* was making the point that in time of war a government puts priority on the nurturing of the morale of armed forces and the people and resents it when the media report facts and incidents which can detract from this agenda building. Taleb, commenting on the role of media objectivity in an international crisis, says that each of the parties involved has its own interests, claims and beliefs but that domestic pressures (such as criticism of one's own armed forces during military action) can promote public opposition to this media objective agenda.[73] It can also give advantage to the government agenda in terms of "spin" or weighing a story to the government advantage, a point to be examined in the empirical chapters.

As previously outlined, Manheim defines agenda building as "the process by which issues emerge as legitimate concerns of the polity and its policymakers" and that such a system is made up of three distinct agendas – those of the media, the public and the policymakers.[74] As noted in Section 2.2, "emerge" seems more reactive whereas proactivity and the positive pushing of policy may well be the main factors in *agenda building*, certainly as regards the UK Labour Party administration of Tony Blair (1997 to 2007). McNair points out that whether as a result of its policies, or their poor presentation, Labour remained in opposition for 18 years, an exile from power which forced them to professionalise their PR policy and become more proactive.[75] New Labour's more proactive policy in terms of media handling certainly came into play during the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo in 1999 when Alastair Campbell, Prime Minister Tony Blair's Director of Communications, visited NATO Headquarters in Brussels to reorganise the public relations handling of the conflict, drafting in specialist professional media advisers to brief the media and allow the generals to get on with military affairs.[76] Moorcraft & Taylor refer to NATO losing the propaganda war to Serbia, Serbia publicising its civilian casualties from

[73] Taleb, B.A., *The Bewildered Herd: Media Coverage of International Conflicts & Public Opinion* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse,2004), p98.
[74] Manheim, J.B. "A Model of Agenda Dynamics," *Communication Yearbook*, London (1987), p.499.
[75] McNair, Brian, 'PR Must Die: spin, anti spin and political public relations in the UK, 1997-2004', *Journalism Studies* (Vol.5, no.3, 2004), p.329.
[76] Campbell, Alastair, *The Blair Years* (London: Arrow Books, 2008), p.377.

NATO bombing to win external support.[77] The extent of these casualties was untrue but under pressure "NATO's media operation began to fold" until Campbell reorganised the system, drafting more experienced British Army media operations people into Kosovo to give better and more frequent briefings to the 2,700 plus media present in the area of operations.[78] This was a more proactive stance than NATO's previous more reactive media agenda-building process.

Taking the "proactive" analogy further, Cobb and Elder propose that issues which make their way on to the agenda of government decision makers may have won their position as a result of group conflict and the desire of these decision makers to "manage" such a conflict, whether it is as a result of internal government policy-making pressures or external factors pressing on a government for either a change in policy or the adoption by the government of new policy. Hallahan quotes "political special interest theory" in that organisations exercise political power to seek favourable public policies to advance themselves.[79] In other words, they seek to place their own policy objective or objectives on the government agenda as did Peter Mandelson and Philip Gould in reshaping the presentation, policy and objectives of the Labour Party to reach out to the middle ground of politics and away from the polarisation in which the Labour Party failed to adapt to change in a world of increasing globalisation.[80] Blair's Chief of Staff Jonathan Powell refers to the fact that the Labour Party learned bitter lessons about handling the media from its 18 years in Opposition. And, in the build-up to the 1997 General Election, sought

[77] Moorcraft, Paul l. & Taylor, Philip M., *Shooting the Messenger: The Political Impact of War Reporting* (Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books, 2008), pp.136-137.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Hallahan, Kirk, "The dynamics of Issues Activation and Response," *Journal of Public Relations Research*, Jan. 2001, Vol. 13, Issue 1, p.27. Also, Salisbury, Robert H., 'Interest Representation: The Dominance of Institutions', *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (Mar., 1984), pp. 64-76. Salisbury here refers to the dominant position of corporations and other powerful lobby groups in Washington D.C. However, these interest groups can also exist within a government, contesting views struggling to put their views on the government agenda. As Philip Gould, a long-standing political adviser to Tony Blair, points out it took the Labour Party 14 years, three elections and three party leaders to win power through the agenda of New Labour and the "special interest" of that internal reforming group. Gould, Philip, *The Unfinished Revolution: How Modernisers saved the Labour Party* (London: Little, Brown & Company, 1998), p.xii.
[80] Gould, pp394-397.

to win over the Tory tabloids and the middle ground voter who was not a natural Labour supporter.[81]

On this theme of seeking to dominate the middle ground, Philo refers to a speech made by Tony Blair in 2002 in which Blair underlined the need to "redistribute power, wealth and opportunity to the many, not the few". It was a speech which on the surface would appeal to many people, but as Philo points out in his analysis, Blair and New Labour had already rejected any suggestion of increasing income of property taxes "to dent the wealth of the super-rich" and, on TV news the speech was attributed to the need for Blair to gather support in his own party for the coming war with Iraq.[82] That contention does fall in with the proactive communications policy of New Labour and there are further comparisons in the chapter on Iraq 2003 to show how these proactive presentation and media handling techniques were adapted to media agenda building in time of conflict.

To place an item on the agenda of a government is a primary step on the way to defining a policy, whether that policy is a strategic one, to be enshrined in legislation, or whether it is a tactical or reactive one, utilising current legislation or governmental powers. Strategy, in terms of media handling in the New Labour government, meant planning ahead – one month, three months, one year etc. – placing intended announcements and policy launches on a grid of events, tight control of this by Alastair Campbell's team at Number 10, daily meetings at 0830 every weekday at No.10 by departmental heads of communication or their deputies.[83] An item may make the government agenda as a consequence of

[81] Powell, pp.190-191.
[82] Philo, p.186. Blair's speech reintroduced a word previously banned by New Labour "redistribution". The TV report to which Philo refers commented that Blair had spent the past few weeks "preaching a war and backing America" that it made many Labour members nervous about Blair's commitment to conflict. Blair made the "redistribution of wealth" speech ahead of the party conference which, Philo comments, might be seen as rhetoric designed simply to increase his support in the Labour Party.
[83] Campbell, Alastair, *The Burden of Power: Countdown to* Iraq (London: Hutchinson, 2012)p.167. The author of this dissertation, as an Assistant Director of Communications at the Home Office, regularly attended these 0830 morning meetings. Strategic media handling planning was tightly centralised and proactive. Under the previous administration, for whom as a career civil servant the author also worked, the various departments and ministries had more flexibility but media planning

internal discussion and conflict, for example in the UK from an annual party conference or party executive decision leading to a pre-election manifesto commitment, as with Labour in the 1997 election and subsequent elections. It can also force its way on the agenda through outside organisations, as Hallahan has proposed in the political "special interest" theory.

There is some relevance here to Carr's view that the business of any politician is to consider not merely what is morally or theoretically desirable, but also the forces which exist in the world, and how they can be directed or manipulated to probably partial realisations of the end in view.[84] Studies, for example of the Westminster-Whitehall lobby system bring up the question of UK government agenda building, the reliance of the media on that "exclusive" source material and the questions of official secrecy, censorship and propaganda in terms of (government) source/media relationships. Jones makes the point that political journalism is highly competitive and that some correspondents feel the need to demonstrate that they have better contact than others by, during a broadcast, using terms such as "Downing Street insiders are insisting" or "ministers believe." Yet, as a former BBC political correspondent, he admits that he may only have talked to no more than a minister's junior aide or a press officer.[85] Herman and Chomsky raise such a spectre with their contention that the mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with "powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest".[86] Whilst the lobby system may benefit both sides in terms of gain from the political media interface, this study will look at the area of government agenda building in time of conflict to see if there has been a similar "dependency" built up in Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003.

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had a less strategic aspect and was more reactive and tactical, responding to events rather than creating them.

[84] Carr, E.H., *What is History?* (London: Penguin, 1990), p.128.

[85] Jones, Nicholas, 'Reporting politics', in Chapman, Jane &Kinsey, Marie (eds), *BroadcastJournalism: A critical introduction* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p.174

[86] Herman, Edward S. & Chomsky, Noam, *Manufacturing consent: the Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York, Pantheon, 1988), p.19.

Agenda building for a government and positively influencing the media is a vital part of gaining support for any policy. It is a positive approach, a proactive one and must be strategic in terms of not only how to win support from those with no strong views, but also how to retain and strengthen existing support, diminish opposition or at least bring as much of that opposition into a state of neutrality or non-alignment and thus reduce any conflict. Above all, it should take note of previous best practice, success or lack of success, what worked and did not work. Perloff cites the use of evidence in successful persuasion in order to substantiate the claims for the effectiveness or potential effectiveness of that policy, that evidence consisting of factual assertions, quantitative information (such as statistics) eyewitness statements, narrative reports and testimonials advanced by others (*independent endorsement* [author's italics]).[87]

Bakir gives a good example of "independent endorsement" in quoting the dispute between oil giant Shell and environmental campaigner Greenpeace over environmental pollution involved in the disposal of the North Sea oil rig Brent Spar. It was the first of the oil rigs to be disposed of since drilling began in the 1970s and the controversy centred on Shell's decision to dump the rig in a deep trench in the North East Atlantic. Greenpeace objected and focused media attention on the issue by direct action, boarding the rig in April 30th 1995 and remaining there until 20th June the same year. Shell cancelled the plan for deep-sea disposal and one of the key points in the Greenpeace campaign to win public, support was cultivating credibility not only from its own scientific advisers but also government scientists.[88] This matter of "independent endorsement", the agenda-building advantage of getting someone else to put your case for you and its use by the UK government will be raised in the Conclusions chapter.

[87] Perloff, Richard M., *The Dynamics of Persuasion*: *Communication and Attitudes in the 21st Century* (London: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2003), p.180.
[88] Bakir, Vian, 'Risk Communication, Television News and the Trust Generation: The Utility of Ethos', in Bakir & Barlow, p.138.

Such government agenda building involves favourably influencing the media into supporting government policy and, hopefully, although not exclusively, through them the general public. [89] This positive influencing was the intention of both Eden and Blair, albeit that they operated in vastly different media eras and it is how they manipulated and succeeded, or did not succeed, which makes a valid historical comparison of government agenda building in two different conflicts and how a planned government agenda could possibly turn around, or alienate media support.

A clear case of reversing the political support policy of a major newspaper group occurred in the 1997 UK General Election when News Corporation media proprietor Rupert Murdoch switched support from the Conservative Party to the Labour Party, giving Labour support from one-third of the national press circulation from the top selling tabloid *Sun* to the well-established newspaper of record *The Times.*[90] This was the result of an elaborate courtship stemming from July 1995 when New Labour leader Tony Blair addressed News Corporation executives and gave his commitment to an open and free economy.[91] Himelboim and Limur make the point that nowadays media owners' financial interests endanger freedom of the press more than political institutions do, which may add weight to the argument vis-à-vis Murdoch's switch of support from the Conservatives to New Labour.[92] This support continued through to taking the government side in the military intervention leading

[89] Any government information campaign could include direct advertising and marketing to reach the general public as well as through media methods such as offering interviews and arranging press conferences.

[90] Curran, James, 'The press in an age of globalisation', in Curran, James & Seaton, Jean (eds), *Power without Responsibility: The press, broadcasting and new media in Britain* (London: Routledge, 2003), p.74. Also in Greenslade, Roy, *Press Gang: How newspapers make profits from propaganda* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2004), p.661.

[91] Ibid. Blair also changed Labour's stand on monopoly controls of media in 1996, opposing the then Conservative government's policy of blocking large press groups from buying ITV or Channel 5 on the grounds that "it treat[s] newspaper groups unfairly in their access to broadcasting markets." REF This supported Murdoch's ambitions and won his eventual support in the 1997 General Election. REF

[92] Himelboim & Limur, p.236. Also Harrington, Stephen, 'Popular news in the 21st century', *Journalism* (Vol. 9, No 3, 2008), p.270. Harrington cites contentions that media outlets have turned away from their original message of quality journalism and are focussing instead on circulation or ratings figures to therefore increase profits for investors.

to the Iraq 2003 conflict, key support.[93] McChesney, although his study is US-based, contends that governments need the active support of the public for the war effort, not only to pay for it but to provide the soldiers willing to die for the war. He is blunt in his assessment that the US Government had needed to lie to win support for its aims in past conflicts – World War 1, Korea, Vietnam and Iraq 1991.[94] Another interesting study by Arquilla and Ronfeldt, particularly pertinent to new technology and the media's use of it, concludes that modification of the Cold War Strategy of "maximizing openness" should be developed into a more nuanced strategy "that weaves skilfully between openness and more proprietary approaches."[95] This, written at the halfway point between the Iraq 1991 and 2003 Wars, is a shrewd assessment of future government agenda building needs within the context of new technology and the effects this may have on official censorship or control. It points the need for a more subtle approach as will be examined in both the Iraq and Conclusions chapters.

2.4. Aspects of political communication: the political/media interface

Kriesi notes that the media increasingly constitute the crucial channel for conveying politics, providing information but at the same time becoming actors in the political process, mobilising public consensus for a particular issue.[96] Therefore, it is vital for any government to make use of the media to intervene in that process and influence public opinion or, the converse in terms of looking at media reporting of events and responding to perhaps adverse reporting, to alter policy and favourably influence public perception. It is not a new concept since Habermas quotes Britain in the late 17th century as a model case for what he calls the development of the

[93] Bromley, Michael, 'The battlefield is the media', in Allan, Stuart & Zelizer, Barbie (eds), *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.227. Also Greenslade, p.671, which refers to the Murdoch *Sun* giving Tony Blair "full-hearted support."
[94] McChesney, Robert, 'The US news media and World War III', *Journalism* (Vol. 3, No. 1, 2002), p.15.
[95] Arquilla, John & Ronfeldt, David, 'Implications for Grand Strategy', in Arquila & Ronfeldt (eds) *In Athena's Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age* (Santa Monica CA, RAND, 1997), p.433.
[96] Kriesi, Hanspeter, ' Mobilizing Public Opinion in "Audience Democracies"', in Esser & Pfetsch, p.194.

public sphere, in other words forces endeavouring to influence the decisions of state authority - the growth of the modern Parliament and structures of society such as the new manufacturing industries along with the elimination of the institution of censorship, the latter particularly marking a new stage of development of the "public sphere" in terms of the ability of the press to more easily present rational-critical arguments "with whose aid political decisions could be brought before the new forum of the public".[97] Nevertheless, Habermas notes that with the development of the new media of the twentieth century – film, radio and television - the publicist nature of the media could be so threatening that in some countries the establishment of these media was under government direction or government control.[98] Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany are examples of this approach although, as will be highlighted in the Suez chapter here, attempts were made to control the BBC by the Eden government.[99]

There is a wide spectrum of literature on political communication, a concept defined by Manheim as "encompassing the creation, distribution, control, use, processing and effects of information as a political resource, whether by governments, organisations, groups or individuals".[100] Included in this political communication field are works on propaganda, a term originating with the Catholic Church in the 17th century and referring to the propagation or "spreading" of faith but which has now come to suggest the subjective use of political information in terms of "news

[97] Habermas, Jurgen, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (London: Polity Press, 2003), pp.57-59.
[98] Habermas, p.187
[99] Bullock points out one distinct difference in Stalin's and Hitler's propaganda methods in that unable to reach the Russian people through the poorly developed media of mass communications, Stalin relied heavily on oral agitation and propaganda by the individual Party member for example individual exhortation in the factories, mines and collective farms. In contrast in Germany with its much more advanced economic development and a higher cultural level, the Nazis were able to make much more use of indirect methods which allowed the propaganda method to be concealed and conveyed through a variety of other activities.[Bullock, Alan, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), p.429.]
[100] Manheim, Jarol, 'Strategic Public Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy', in Negrine, Ralph & Stanyer, James (eds), *The Political Communication Reader* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2007), p.78.

management" by governments.[101] This is different from the original meaning of the word, coined in 1622 when Pope Gregory XV, in order to fight against the growing spread of Protestantism, created The Office for the Propagation of the Faith (*Congregatio de Propaganda Fide)* which, according to Bernays in his study of "Propaganda" dealt in the opposite of deception by defining Catholic faith and doctrine to encourage belief. This was far from the modern conception as denoting lies, half-truths, selective history "or any of the other tricks we associate with propaganda.[102] Jowett and O'Donnell differentiate "propaganda" from "persuasion" by defining *propaganda* as "a form of communication that attempts to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist whereas *persuasion* is interactive and attempts to satisfy the needs of the persuader and persuadee.[103] One can take the 1622 meaning of "propaganda" as more of "persuasion" in 2011 since in the original sense it would have involved an interaction between priest and parishioner or convert in order to cement their faith in Catholicism. Nevertheless the word "propaganda" has taken on a modern connotation which diverges from the original definition, a connotation to be examined in terms of UK government media management techniques.

In this "management" of the media, it is also necessary also to review material on psychological warfare (Psyops) which in the UK military system has been renamed as "Information Support" and includes methods such as radio broadcasts and information leaflet drops targeted at enemy opinion in order to save lives on both sides, according to UK military official doctrine.[104] Similarly, researchers in the political communications field need to examine material on *public diplomacy,* an information strategy designed to inform, engage and influence foreign publics, the difference from formal diplomacy being that formal diplomacy is a government-to-government relationship and *public diplomacy* can be a way of one government

[101] Hammond, Philip, 'Reporting "Humanitarian Warfare: propaganda, moralism and NATO's Kosovo War', *Journalism Studies* (Vol1, No.3, 2000), p.367.
[102] Bernays, Edward, *Propaganda* (New York: Ig Publishing, 2005), p.11.
[103] Jowett, Garth S. & O'Donnell, Victoria, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (California, Sage, 1999), p.1.
[104] Miller, David, 'The Propaganda Machine', in Miller, David & Thomas, Mark (eds), *Tell me lies: Propaganda and Media Distortion in the Attack on Iraq* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p.92.

trying to get around the formal links with another by speaking directly to the public of that country to provide an interpretation of its own values and policies.[105] In this context Nye raises the concept of "Soft power", a means of setting the agenda and attracting others in world politics in order to win support, through co-opting people rather than coercing.[106]

In terms of government agenda building any government may make use of some, or all, of the above methods of political communication. Yet it is a government's use of various methods of "political communication", which may include all of the above methods mentioned, which leads journalists to resist politicians' efforts at manipulation and assert their own independence.[107] Vincent Campbell, commenting on McNair's observations on the perceived shift in journalistic attitudes away from deference (as in Eden's time) to a more adversarial position (a more common media stance during Blair's premiership), reflects that critics of this journalistic move to a more adversarial stance claim that there has been a shift from "healthy scepticism" to "a corrosively cynical and hyper-adversarial position" in which politics is seen as a degraded profession.[108] Thus a detailed examination of the agendas of both government and media may expose a conflict of agendas and, indeed, as a prime requisite of this study may show how a UK government attempts to resolve such a conflict and win media support for its regime-changing aims in Suez 1956 and Iraq 2001.

Elements also covered include how the media interacted with the military to gather the information needed for their reports. For example, an interview with Mark Laity, the BBC's correspondent in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in the 1991 Iraq War but a NATO spokesman in Iraq 2003, demonstrates both sides of the agenda, media and

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[105] Seib, Philip, *Beyond the Front Lines*: *How the News Media Cover a World Shaped by War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p.126.
[106] Nye, Joseph S., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Public Affairs, 2004), p.5.
[107] Swanson, David. I., 'Transnational Trends in Political Communication', in Esser & Pfetsch, p.51.
[108] Campbell, Vincent, *Political Communication and the "Chaos Paradigm* (Paper presented at the Political Studies Association annual conference, Bath University, 11th-13th April, 2007), p.9.

government.[109] Laity, who can comment on both the media and politico/military sides of the fence, also reflected on the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of facilities provided by the military or government in Iraq 1991 to gather that information and also responded to questions on media suspicions of possible censorship which, in the media's view, may have prevented factual and objective reporting of conflict. Other sources such as Sylvester and Huffman, Miller, Stauber and Rampton were also consulted on this aspect, which includes a study of possible propaganda use.[110]

On this aspect of propaganda, there may be times when the media actively co-operate with political or military authorities and in *Media Access and the Military,* Baroody examines this point when, due to "national emergency", the media may act as cheerleaders for a particular side, boosting or lowering morale among the troops.[111] She was specifically looking at the media/military relations and interactions concerning US military and government during the 1991 Gulf conflict, whereas this study mainly looks at the relationships between the media and UK authorities in Iraq 2003. Yet in her methodology and approach there are similarities in that the author of this study and Baroody are both examining these relationships in which reporters see their jobs as interpreters of events while some military authorities may ideally see journalists as conveyors on information without bias or opinion.[112] Edwards and Cromwell, in their critique of media/UK government interaction in the lead up to the 2003 Iraq War look at this "cheerleader" angle,

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[109] Mark Laity is now Chief Spokesman for the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and his comments were made in an interview with the author of this dissertation on August 14th, 2007.

[110] Sylvester, Judith & Huffman, Susan, *Reporting from the Front: the Media and the Military* (New York: Roman & Littlefield, 2005); Miller, Laura, Stauber, John & Rampton, Sheldon. 'War is Sell', in Miller, David (ed) *Tell me lies: Propaganda and Media Distortion in the Attack on Iraq* (London: Pluto Press, 2004).
Commenting on "objectivity" in reporting during recent world conflicts, including Iraq 2003, Allan and Zelizer highlight the possible areas of concern when the media may appear to be in the military's pockets, breaking down the autonomy which journalism in wartime likes to assume it functions. They discuss the problems of partisan reporting and conflicts with impartiality and the tensions, contradictions and contingencies that shape a journalist's role in wartime. [Allan, Stuart & Zelizer, Barbie, *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp.6-13.].

[111] Baroody, Judith Raine, *Media Access and the Military* (Oxford: University Press of America, 1998), p.vii.

[112] Ibid, p.vii.

examining media reaction to the March 18, 2003, speech in the Commons by Prime Minister Tony Blair stating the reasons why Saddam Hussein had to be confronted and outlining the reasons for taking military action against the Iraqi dictator. They refer to the *Mirror* editorial of the following day "not questioning" Blair's belief in the rightness of military action although restating the newspaper's opposition to the war.[113] Edwards and Cromwell say that Blair received similar praise across the spectrum of the UK media, despite their contention that the speech was "packed full of lies and deceptions that could have easily been exposed by journalists".[114] Halliday, in his study of media reporting in the 1990-1991 Gulf War comments that every modern war has involved disputes on the media coverage of that war, disputes that explicitly or implicitly reflect on to broader concerns about the role of the media, and war, in a democratic society.[115] He raised the aspects of possible conflict between government and the media in terms of the media's concern with the near, immediate communication of news to the public and the state's occupation with security on military matters and with the "broader, political impact that news may have on public opinion".[116] All these contentions will be examined in the relevant empirical chapters, comparing and contrasting the agenda-building actions of the Eden and Blair administrations.

2.5. Mechanics of agenda building

It is intended that this study will show the changes and development of UK government media agenda building, both nationally and internationally, in the Suez 1956 debacle and the more successful, from the UK government's point of view, Iraq 2003 conflict. Certainly, a media plan is important, but it is only a part of agenda building which can have a wider communications remit to include such

[113] Edwards, David & Cromwell, David. 'Mass Deception: How the Media Helped the Government Deceive the People', in Miller, David (ed), *Tell me lies: Propaganda and Media Distortion in the Attack on Iraq* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p.210.
[114] Ibid, p.211
[115] Halliday, Fred, 'Manipulation and Limits: Media Coverage of the Gulf War, 1990-91', in Allen, Tim & Seaton, Jean (eds), *The Media of Conflict: War Reporting and Representations of Ethnic Violence* (London: Zeb Books, 1999), p.127.
[116] Ibid.

factors as direct marketing and advertising, arranging public events and personal meetings between a government principal and influential groups such as media chiefs.

The two conflicts examined are linked in that they are Middle East-based and are wars of intervention and attempted regime change, in the case of Suez 1956 the invasion of a sovereign state, Egypt, by Britain, France and Israel. This conflict had no United Nations support, unlike the Iraq 1991 war in which a coalition of 34 nations, including Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia took action following a United Nations resolution. Similarly, as in the case of Suez 1956, the Iraq 2003 conflict had no UN mandate to invade a sovereign state and the lack of such a mandate posed problems for the UK government in its attempts to win both national and international support for what was, in effect, a regime-change policy. Shaw refers to British Prime Minister Anthony Eden in August 1956 working to avoid any involvement of the United Nations in the UK's military planning against Egypt for fear the UN might interfere and stop any attempt to retake the Suez Canal.[117] Similarly, in the lead-up to the Iraq 2003 conflict Prime Minister Tony Blair would have been happy to have had a UNSCR to legitimise the use of military force but as his Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said "we do not regard it as essential".[118] Neither did the American government, as Alastair Campbell reveals in his diary entry of 22 July 2002, referring to talks between C, the head of UK's Secret Intelligence Service, George Tenet, Director of the USA's Central Intelligence Agency and Condoleezza Rice, President George W. Bush's National Security Adviser.[119]

The Suez Crisis can be regarded as an attempt by Prime Minister Anthony Eden to regain the British sense of empire and its place as one of the great powers, a position certainly lost during the Second World War. Yet there are counter arguments that perhaps in the case of Suez, as will be examined in the relevant empirical chapter, that the real reason was economic in terms of Eden wishing to

[117] Shaw, Tony, *Eden, Suez and the Mass Media* (London: I B Tauris, 1956), p.41.
[118] Curtis, Mark, *Web of Deceit: Britain's Real Role in the World* (London: Vintage, 2003), pp.9-10.
[119] Campbell, *Countdown to Iraq, p.278.*

preserve the oil supply lifeline to the Middle East in the face of Egyptian nationalisation. Similarly, the 2003 Iraq war could be framed in a similar way with the USA and UK desiring to preserve the same economic hydro-carbon lifeline but using "perception management" or agenda building to hide that point in favour of the "good versus evil" argument which relies on media support for the political military policy, lost in the Vietnam War.[120]

Edelman remarks that leaders must create an impression that they are acting decisively whether or not it is actually the case. They must use symbols and language to give the impression that they are effectively coping with problems. The usage of phrases like "was in consultation with" or "will meet with government leaders today" gives the impression to followers and possible ancillary groups that the leadership is making progress in getting their issue before the proper authorities.[121] Edelman was writing on the activities of pressure groups outside government, but this can be equally turned around to reflect the agenda-building activities of a government in power. This would be a proactive government gathering stakeholder support, seeking independent endorsement of policy and putting in place damage limitation techniques at the planning stage, all part of its own agenda to support a policy initiative. Lance Price, deputy to Tony Blair's Director of Communications Alastair Campbell in the late 1990s, refers to the advantage of independent endorsement (in term of gaining votes) in the weeks before the UK 2001 May General Election. The party had to show it had policies that would reach out to the non-traditional constituencies of support such as small businesses and self-employed.[122] Support and independent endorsement, it is suggested, are even more necessary in a wartime situation where not only does a government seek public backing for policies, but also for its stance in putting the lives of its citizens serving in the military at risk.

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[120] Klare, Michael, *Blood and Oil: How America's thirst for petrol is killing us* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2004), pp.3-4. Klare cites the January 23, 1980 declaration by President Carter which designated the secure flow of Persian Gulf oil as a "vital interest" of the United States.
[121] Edelman, p.58.
[122] Price, p.325.

As stated previously, Rogers and Dearing describe a*genda building*, as a process through which the policy agendas of political elites are influenced by a variety of factors, including the media agendas and public agendas. However, in the hands of a UK government determined to drive through its policy agenda (and certainly one which faces crucial and immediate policy decisions involving serious military implications) agenda building can, and must, be redefined in a more positive light. War acts as a catalyst and can shorten the time for decision, for example decisions awaiting reference to a full Parliamentary debate or even a weekly Cabinet meeting may be hastened. Such key decisions may then fall to a small Cabinet group which is in the driving seat with key political figures sitting on it – Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Minister of Defence, plus military chiefs of staff - which can take rapid decisions and bypass full Cabinet.[123]

Political actors are not simply concerned with influencing what people think about; they also hope to *shape* how people think in terms of social problems and their solutions. Thus protesters are ultimately interested in shaping the agenda-building process by helping define how issues are interpreted in the mass media.[124] The same goes for government agenda-building and which is not just the prerogative of protest groups as shown by the fact that in 1999, just before the NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia was launched, NATO quadrupled the size of its media operation (as previously mentioned). The UK government's Director of Communications Alastair Campbell was tasked with mobilising British and international public opinion in favour of the bombing campaign against Serbia on "humanitarian grounds," i.e., to stop "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo.[125] Campbell refers to this in his diary as saying that the military campaign had to be founded on simple concepts, as did any supporting media campaign. His media strategy and

[123] Dickie, John, *The New Mandarins: How British Foreign Policy Works* (London: I.B Tauris, 2004), p.132. The Blair War Cabinet of 2003 also included his Director of Communications, Alastair Campbell. Dickie notes that it was his presence at the heart of war planning which was a major factor in sustaining his dominant authority.
[124] Smith, Jackie, McCarthy, John D, McPhail, Clark, Augustyn, Boguslaw, "From Protest to Agenda Building: Description Bias in Media Coverage of Protest Events in Washington, D.C. , *Social Forces*; June 2001, Vol.79 Issue 4, p2000.
[125] Curtis, Mark, *Web of Deceit: Britain's Real Role in the World,* Vintage, (London, 2003), p.21.

the enhancement of the NATO media operation was accepted by the NATO Secretary General Javier Solena and Director of Communications Jamie Shea.[126]

No government engaged in agenda building will totally neglect to influence a wide range of publics, including the media opposed to government policy. The Labour Party, in the run up to the 2001 General election made great efforts to woo opposing media, for example the influential Paul Dacre, editor-in-chief of Associated Newspapers (*Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday)*.[127] Winning the agenda battle is particularly important for a government in the run up to a general election and the prospect of not continuing in office. No opportunity may be lost by an agenda-building politician who may seek get himself on a light chat show or other entertainment programme where he may not be challenged as he would be, say, on a current affairs programme.[128] Jonathan Powell refers to the Blair government's opening up of the "quasi-Masonic" Lobby system where the previous exclusive access to government given to these Parliamentary correspondents was changed to a much more open system of briefing to which non Parliamentary journalists and even foreign journalists were invited to briefings at No, 10. This, says Powell, was an attempt to bring the Lobby correspondents into line and "abandon their more juvenile lines of questioning" to support government agenda building.[129]

Agenda building seeks support from a myriad of publics, and policy organisations across the political spectrum have learned to use communication technologies to target the smallest audiences likely to be helpful to their political aims and to deliver information. This information is typically publicised to mobilise and demobilise segments of the public to serve narrow strategic objectives often masking the identity or intent of the communicator in the process.[130] Whilst appreciating this contention, one can reflect that such information is used in a *tactical* manner rather

[126] Campbell, Alastair, *The Blair Years* (London: Arrow Books, 2007), p.377
[127] Lloyd, p.94.
[128] Dahlgren, Peter, Television in the Public Sphere: Citizenship, Democracy and the Media (Sage, London, 2000),p.56.
[129] Powell, p.196.
[130] Ibid, p.280

than strategic, as underlined by Philip Gould, one of the creators of New Labour and its communications structure.[131] Gould, a Labour Party political consultant and former adviser to Tony Blair, defines strategy as the heart of any campaign with messages, events and logistics planned out on a grid in order to drive forward the political agenda through sustained media appearances, photo opportunities and press conferences. A grid entry may define the tactics to handle a single event, such as naming who the spokesman is to be, when an announcement is to be made and which media are to be specifically targeted in order to achieve a specific aim. However, all of the specific aims, and the tactics used to achieve these aims, come under the overall umbrella of the strategic media plan. Tactics may be short-term; strategy is long term.

This lack of an agenda building communications strategy failed, as stated in a damning August 2003 report by Cardiff University law professors Campbell and Lee which labelled the government's handling of the 2001 foot and mouth outbreak as "panic response" and blatant incompetence."[132] Alastair Campbell confirms this in his diary when he quotes Tony Blair as referring to the fact that the foot and mouth handling was problematic before No.10 stepped in and "gripped" it and brought in the Army, installing a more strategic approach operationally and in media handling terms.[133] This problem of a tactical rather than a strategic response in both the Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003 chapters, will be examined in the empirical chapters and will attempt to fill in gaps which may exist in existing research or to enhance existing research into the field of agenda building.

[131] Gould, Philip, *The Unfinished Revolution: How Modernisers saved the Labour Party* (London: Little, Brown & Company, 1998), pp-335-336.
[132] BBC News Online, *Lawyers damn FMD handling,* 27 August, 2003.
[133] Campbell, *Countdown to Iraq,* p273,p.588.

2.6. Agenda-building tools

An examination of government-media relationships within the scope of this study must take into account the possible influences of other methods of government information handling which come into the total equation. Several methods of exerting government influence in terms of information flow to a target audience include Propaganda, Psychological Operations, and Public Diplomacy – all of which may contain implications of improper use of government information resources or, to put it bluntly, lies. In order to clarify and prevent misunderstanding and misinterpretation, it may be useful to look at accepted definitions of all of these terms gleaned from an in-depth examination of published material.

Sir Robert Marett, a Foreign Office diplomat who worked on propaganda during two World Wars, spelled out his three rules for success:

- Have the right friends in the right places. Personal contacts are all important, e.g., editors.
- Provide services which fill a need – provide features, raw material for articles for nominal fee or none.
- Whenever possible do not conduct the propaganda yourself but get a national of the country to do it for you.[134]

Marett, on the whole, is referring to "white propaganda" which is the selective presentation of factual material and the omission of material which could undermine its credibility. On the other hand "black propaganda", can include all types of creative deceit and depends on the receiver's willingness to accept the credibility of the source: "grey" propaganda is somewhere between the two as the source may not be correctly identified and the accuracy of the information is uncertain.[135]

[134] Marett, Sir Robert, *Through the Back Door: An Inside View of Britain's Overseas Information Services* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1968), p.58.
[135] Jowett, Garth S. & O'Donnell, Victoria, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks, California, Sage, 1999), pp.14-15.

Propaganda is not necessarily brainwashing or the introduction of new ideas, attitudes and beliefs but rather a resonance strategy, the discovery of culturally shared beliefs and the deliberate reinforcement and ultimately aggrandisement of these beliefs.[136] This definition will be returned to in the Iraq chapter, with reference to the "embedded media" strategy.

Compare propaganda with "psyops" – "planned psychological activities in peace and war directed at enemy, friendly and neutral countries in order to influence attitudes and behaviour affecting the achievement of political and military objectives."[137] This would include leaflet dropping to influence and lower morale of both enemy combatants and civilians and also the setting up of radio stations in theatre by the invading powers to do the same. Former research fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs Mark Curtis quotes a UK Ministry of Defence document published in 2001, freely available on the web, as a definition of psyops.[138] It reads:

"Public support will be vital to the conduct of military interventions." In future "more effort will be required to ensure that such public debate is properly informed."[139]

Again, this is proactive agenda building, positive mechanisms used to win support for a policy agenda. War, after all, is an extension of policy as 19th century Prussian military strategist Karl Von Clausewitz wrote.[140]

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[136] Johnson-Cartee, Karen S. & Copeland, Gary A, *Strategic Political Communication* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), p.4.
[137] Marett, p.54.
[138] *The Future Strategic Context for Defence* (London: Ministry of Defence, 2001), para.45. It reads: In full: "Public support will be vital to the conduct of military interventions. Support will depend in large measure on the success of such interventions. If a military operation were seen to result in defeat, this would seriously undermine public support for future operations. The way in which operations are conducted will also be vital to maintaining public support, particularly where our participation in an operation is discretionary. Potential adversaries may seek to undermine public support to delay or derail intervention. Effective communication strategies to promote wider understanding of the rationale behind the conduct of operations will be vital if we are to avoid constraints which compromise our ability to achieve military objectives. The ability of the media to affect the public and political agenda on a national and global scale is likely to increase, and may have a major impact on where, how and when the UK and others react to natural disasters, humanitarian crises and conflicts."
[139] Curtis, Mark, 'Psychological Warfare Against the Public: Iraq and Beyond,' in Miller (ed), p.70

A third term used in government *agenda building*, officially in the US, but not officially in the UK (where the term "media operations" is used in a military support sense) is "public diplomacy". [141] The US government defines this as what it does to officially influence and persuade international audiences through "the cultural, educational and informational programmes, citizen exchanges or broadcasts used to promote the national interests of the United States through understanding, informing and influencing foreign audiences."[142] Zaharna refers to the terms *propaganda* and *public diplomacy* as being interchangeable quoting US ambassador Richard Holbrooke as his source.[143] In use in the Iraq 2003 conflict was the concept of Information Dominance, described by Miller as bringing information into line with all other military concepts as an element of combat power by building up and protecting friendly information and degrading information received by your adversary.[144]

So, propaganda, psyops, public diplomacy (media operations) and information dominance all can be said to be tools in government agenda building, although in evidence to the UK House of Commons Select Committee on Defence in 2003, Air

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[140] Von Clausewitz, Karl, *Vom Kriege* (Paret, Peter & Howard, Michael, trans, Princeton University Press, 1984), p.80.

[141] Tatham, Steve, *Losing Arab Hearts and Minds: The Coalition, Al Jazeera and Muslim Public Opinion* (London: Hurst & Company, 2006). Tatham makes the distinction, underlining the US military system of specialization in Public Affairs as a career path, whereas in the UK military the equivalent, Media Operations, is usually a secondment for no more than three or four years before returning to a source specialisation and strictly military career path. The author of this dissertation, having been a British Army media operations officer, and having worked alongside US Army Public Affairs Officers, can confirm this.

[142] Snow, p.54.

[143] Zaharna, R. S., 'From Propaganda to Public Diplomacy in the Information Age,' in Kamalipour, Yahya R., & Snow, Nancy (eds), *War, Media and Propaganda* (Maryland, USA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), p.223. Zahama points out that the word "propaganda" entered American popular parlance as a negative term, tied to Nazi propaganda and Communist propaganda. With coercion as the goal information control and deception are key factors to effective propaganda. However, public diplomacy, Zaharna points out, is "open public communication in a global communication arena" with the audience free or not to accept the message. To gain trust public diplomacy must be absolutely credible if a government wants to get across its message. The terms *propaganda* and *public diplomacy* on this definition are therefore NOT interchangeable. This also applies to the UK synonym for public diplomacy (media operations).

[144] Miller, David, 'Information Dominance: The Philosophy of Total Propaganda Control', in Snow et al, pp. 7-10.

Vice Marshal Michael Heath said that apart from "where we would try and lie or dissuade or persuade military commanders, the entire art of Information Operations is based on truth".[145] Yet, while no experienced government press officer will "lie" to the media (since being found out lying once, destroys one's credibility for all time), there could be an omission of facts given to the media which may well be construed as a propaganda ploy. This aspect is examined in Chapters on the 2003 Iraq War and Conclusions to determine how the UK military systems carried out media minding and media briefing, looking at the differences and touching on the technical aspects of official control of information to the media and media onward transmission of that information. Thussu and Freedman say that much of the literature analysing media reporting of international conflict is built round the concern of whether the media accurately and objectively reported events.[146] Conversely there must be concern as to whether the military used non-legitimate (or legitimate) means to restrict or reshape the coverage.[147] What we have here is a classic conflict in the world of journalism in which journalists feel they have the integrity to test claims from official sources in the public interest yet, as Hargreaves points out, opinion surveys suggest that journalists are as little trusted to tell the truth as politicians.[148]

This examination will take into account the contention that while military press officers working to brief the media insist that they will not deceive the same media, the doctrinal relationship between their work and other elements of information operations (such as psyops) inevitably creates suspicions.[149] Whether these

[145] Palmer, Jerry, 'Media Performance and War Efforts', *European Journal of Communication* (Vol. 20, No. 3, 2005, pp.379-386), p.379.
[146] Yet academic and writer on broadcasting Stuart Hall maintains that objectivity is an "operational fiction" since all filming and editing is a manipulation of all data – selectively perceived, interpreted, signified. Editing brings in value judgement and viewpoint. Hall, Stuart, 'Media Power: The Double Bind', *Journal of Communication* (Autumn, 1974.), p.23.
[147] Thussu and Freedman, p.97.
[148] Hargreaves, pp.186-7.
[149] Thussu and Freedman, p.90. Allan and Zellizer refer to reporters in Iraq 2003 being pressurized into not giving criticism or dissent of US government policy as a part of a military "disinformation" policy. However, this criticism is exclusively of the US military authorities and not the British. Allan, Stuart & Zelizer, Barbie, *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime* (Oxford: Routledge, 2004), p.9.

suspicions are justified will be examined in more detail in the empirical chapters on each of the two conflicts.

2.7. Media control and manipulation concerns by government in war-time conflict.

In the first case study of this dissertation, the Suez conflict of 1956, what is described is the media agenda-building policy of Prime Minister Sir Anthony Eden and his relationship with *The Times,* which as Shaw writes, Eden regarded as "his own personal tool rather than an independent-minded newspaper".[150] The Suez empirical chapter will examine whether or not this view contributed to the success of Eden's agenda-building policy. Kelly and Gorst also refer to "black propaganda" by the UK government in the lead-up to military intervention in Egypt including radio broadcasts by the UK to seek to drive a wedge between Egypt and other Arab states, in particular Saudi Arabia.[151]

Manipulation of the media in time of war is not a new concept. For example, Napoleon Bonaparte used the state-controlled newspaper *Moniteur* to plant disinformation abroad and on April 4, 1798, it carried an announcement that "General Bonaparte will be leaving for Brest within the next ten days to take command of the Army of England".[152] In fact Bonaparte was off to take command of French forces to invade Egypt and the *Moniteur* report was believed in England to the effect that the British Admiralty, in the words of Napoleon himself, moved ships to allow his Egyptian invasion force to safely capture Malta on the way to Egypt.[153] Much earlier, McNair remarks that "Moses, it might be said, spun for God

[150] Shaw, Tony, *Eden, Suez and the Mass Media: Propaganda and Persuasion During the Suez Crisis* (London: I.B Tauris, 1996), p.69.
[151] Thornhill, Michael T., 'Trevelyan, Ambassador to Egypt', in Kelly, Saul & Gorst, Anthony, *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis* (Abingdon, Oxon: Frank Cass Publishers, 200), p.15.
[152] Schom, Alan, *Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), p.78.
[153] De Chair, Somerset, *Napoleon on Napoleon: An Autobiography of the Emperor* (London: Cassell, 1992), p.113. Jowett & O'Donnell also refer to Napoleon's propaganda technique of planting pro-French items in foreign language newspapers on the continent and also his production of a newspaper purporting to be British, the *Argus of London*, allegedly edited by an Englishman but which was actually printed in Paris by the French Foreign Office [Jowett, Garth S. & O'Donnell, Victoria, *Propaganda and Persuasion* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 1999)p.88.]

himself when he communicated the contents of the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel".[154] However, worshiping the Golden Calf apart, it may be worth considering Taylor's contention that there may be self-delusion in Western liberal democracies that propaganda was something that only the enemy engaged in.[155] Sir Anthony Eden's press secretary during the Suez Crisis, William Clark, reluctantly admitted that propaganda was a part of government policy when he said: "I fear the government (under both parties) did manage the news of our foreign policy so that the public got a smug and insular view of it.[156]

Taking the contention of political manipulation further, Hindell, writing on the relationships between media and the making of foreign policy says: "The processes can be viewed as two concentric circles. On the inner circle, the policy maker takes action which is then reported by the media which, in turn, is read/seen and absorbed by the policy maker. On the outer circle, events, including government actions, are reported in such a way that section of the public react, feeding their responses back to the policy makers via their elected representatives."[157] The UK and U.S. government media agenda-building exercise in Iraq 1991 and 2003 included the accreditation of media who only then, after that accreditation and vetting, had access to filming troop movements and interviews with senior commanders. This gave the military a strong element of control over what was produced by the media, the converse of the CNN effect.[158] Anderson, commenting on the officially approved Mobile Reporting Teams (MRTs) in the 1991 Iraq War, where journalists were tightly controlled and watched over by military media

[154] McNair, Brian, 'PR Must Die: spin, anti-spin and political public relations in the UK, 1997-2004', *Journalism Studies* (Vol5, No.3, 2004), p.327.
[155] Taylor, Philip M., ' Through a Glass Darkly? Psychological Climate and Psychological Warfare of the Cold War', [Source]
[156] Clark, William, 'Cabinet Secrecy, Collective Responsibility and the British Public's Right to Know', in Franck, Thomas M. & Weisband, Edward (eds), *Secrecy and Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp.207-8.
[157] Hindell, Keith 'The Influence of the Media on Foreign Policy,' *International Relations* (Vol.XII, No.4, April 1995), pp.73-74.
[158] The CNN Effect has been defined as the effect of dramatic real-time television imagery actually driving military policy *(Thussu et al p.104)

"minders", refers to the MRT system as "perhaps the most sophisticated system ever of controlling news of a war."[159]

However, Anderson, a BBC reporter, wrote this in 1991 and in comparing the MRT system of 1991 with the "embedded reporter" arrangement on the 2003 conflict, this study will see if this contention still holds. To this effect the review of literature is key to teasing out all the possible UK government means of manipulating the media, in particular through the government's agenda being wittingly or unwittingly accepted by the media.

In the planning of media coverage of the battlefield in Iraq 2003, the lessons of the Vietnam War may have been learned. The American public reacted adversely to the violence portrayed by television and Chapman quotes the example of television news coverage of civil disturbances at home and of carnage abroad, undermining the status of President Lyndon B. Johnson to the effect that he did not seek another term in office.[160] Zayani and Ayish, in their study of Arab satellite television and crisis reporting in 2003 underline the fact that in a fast developing war zone the media tend to take "rather sensational and dramatic approaches" to the situation and they alarmingly (their words) tend to exaggerate and dramatise images of war-front events that "are likely to bear on public opinion in negative ways."[161] Similarly, in his analysis of news values in terms of coverage of terrorism or political violence (in other words, war), Nossek says that in this context to qualify as newsworthy an event requires drama: injury to civilians and damage to property is simply not enough.[162]

These case studies quoted here raise an interesting point, but what if these images acted in the opposite way to win public support? For example, Taylor, in his study of

[159] Anderson, Steve, 'Hi mate, where's the fighting?' *British Journalism Review* (Vol. 2, No. 12, 1991, pp.12-16), p.12.
[160] Chapman, p.231.
[161] Zayani, Mohamed & Ayish, Muhammad I., 'Arab Satellite Television and Crisis Reporting,' *International Communication Gazette* (Vol. 6, Nos. 5-6, 2006, pp.473-497). p.473.
[162] Nossek, Hillel, 'Our News and their News: The Role of National Identity in the Coverage of Foreign News', *Journalism* (Vol. 5, No.3, 2004), p.354.

the 1991 Iraq War, examines the degree to which the flow of information in a war zone was controlled by the military and political authorities who wished to see the media adopt a particular perspective on what was actually happening.[163]

How government information reaches the media and the element of official control of that material needs to be at the forefront of our minds. Certainly, in a system of checks and balances, both newspapers and broadcasters back in the UK had resident "experts" who would analyse and comment on the "front line" reports. Mostly, these were retired senior military officers who had credibility and who could speak with knowledge about military strategy and tactics. However, without the up-to-date power to influence events and to influence policy, and access to up-to-date intelligence, retired generals and admirals may well have been out of touch in terms of any agenda building they were helping to create on behalf of their media paymasters - a media agenda which may have been in conflict with the government agenda. This is in direct contrast with their successors in command (and the politicians who commanded them) who had their hands firmly on the levers of power and access to internal information and intelligence denied to their retired colleagues.[164]

Indeed, in a study which analysed the way in which television news organisations selected and used expert sources to interpret the 1991 Gulf War, Steele concluded that "experts framed the conflict in a narrowly technical and logistical interpretive context" and failed to place events in a broader, historical, economic or social context.[165] Making another point on media coverage of conflict Hall points out that in TV news "Objectivity, like impartiality, is an operational fiction". His view is that editing is a manipulation of raw data and is selectively perceived and interpreted.[166]

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[163] Taylor, Philip M , *War and the Media: Propaganda and Persuasion in the Gulf War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp.vii-viii.
[164] This point will be gone into in succeeding chapters.
[165] Steele, Janet E., 'Experts and the Operational Bias of Television News: The Case of the Persian Gulf War,' *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* (Vol.72, Issue 4, 1995, pp,799-812), p.809.
[166] Hall, Stuart, 'Media Power: The Double Bind', *Journal of Communication* (Autumn 1974), p.23.

The “CNN effect” is news coverage live and recorded - driving government policy, but Seib claims that many scholars overstate the impact of coverage with reporting of news driving the formation of government policy which he, Seib argues is an overestimation of media power.[167] He also makes the point that the purposeful dissemination of false information, for government-related policy purposes, can lead to the media accepting and publishing such disinformation. The media requirement for speed may outweigh the concern for verification.[168] Therefore, this “raw data” provided by a government source may well lead to a media interpretation supportive to government policy - the reverse of the CNN effect.

Writing in *The Media at War,* Carruthers states that “most agree that television coverage of foreign events has some impact on policy-making.” The dispute is over when, why and to what degree. More forcefully Livingston states that “despite numerous symposia, books, articles and research fellowships devoted to unravelling the CNN effect, success at clarifying has been minimal.”[169]

In effect, Livingston is perhaps reversing the thought on the CNN effect, turning it around the other way, with government influencing media, rather than media influencing a government agenda. Palmer makes the point that modern theories of propaganda concentrate on the ways in which governments influence the communications process by intervening in the relationship between the journalist and the event the journalist reports.[170] With government control of information in a wartime situation, it is the government that has the most influence in terms of provision of material to the media leading to what can be described as “perception management” in order to hold the domestic front and maintain support, a battle the Americans had lost during the Vietnam War.[171] Moreover, in a conflict situation

[167] Seib, Philip, *Beyond the Front Lines: How the News Media Cover a World Shaped by War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.13.
[168] Ibid., p.14.
[169] Carruthers, S.L. *The Media at War: Communication and Conflict in the Twentieth Century,* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p.23.
[170] Palmer, p.382.
[171] Calabrese, Andrew, ‘Casus Belli: Media and the Justification of the Iraq War’, *Television & New Media* (Vol. 6, No. 2, May 2005, pp153-175), pp.159-160.

influence where for security and logistics reasons the government/military authorities have great control of access to the battle area there may perceived to arise a "dependency culture" with the media relying to a great extent on official release of news and access to the battle area.

2.8. Relationships between government and media and dependency culture

Bro, in his examination of past norms in news reporting with those of the 21st century, cites examples of the modern demand for a more "active" journalism, that is to say a reporter who often attempts to prompt people to take action rather than to simply learn about a new problem. The latter he defines as "passive news reporters" who are primarily intent on simply disseminating news stories (relying often on official sources).[172] This "dependency culture" was not confined to UK and US media, for example in their analysis of Danish media coverage of the 2003 conflict, Kristensen and Orsten conclude that their own national media were too reliant on sources within their national government, the coalition and the military.[173] Yet there is a contrary argument as proposed by Zayani and Ayish who highlight the "media orientation" of the coverage of conflict in the Middle East with sensational and dramatic approaches to individual events, personalities and issues at the expense of seeing the big picture and objective analysis.[174] Indeed, in terms of expertise and "objective analysis" the foreign correspondent of any media outlet is a key figure, but in their examination of this field of expertise Hamilton and Jenner reflect on the "chronic decline" of the elite foreign correspondents coupled with the proliferation of alternate sources of news.[175] Economic pressures have cut down on the numbers of media foreign bureaux in many countries and this can, and does,

[172] Bro, Peter, 'Normative navigation in the news media', *Journalism* (Vol. 9, No. 3, 2008), pp.312-313
[173] Kristensen, Nete Norgaard & Orsten, Mark, 'Danish media at war', *Journalism* (Vol. 8, No. 3, 2007, pp323-343), p.323. Also in McChesney, p.17, where he contends that news tends to have an establishment bias through the fact that reporters often rely on "official sources."
[174] Zayani & Ayish, p.474.
[175] Hamilton John Maxwell & Jenner, Eric, 'Redefining foreign correspondence', *Journalism* (Vol. 5, No. 3, 2004), p.302.

put the media more into the hands of the "official sources" and creates a dependency culture.[176]

A British Army divisional commander in the Iraq 1991 conflict, General Rupert Smith, highlights this "dependency culture" when referring to the build-up to the first Iraq war. Smith understood that the journalists (pressured by their news editors at home) needed to fill space with words and pictures. Smith noted: "I used this understanding in the Gulf in 1990 when considering my method for conducting operations against the Iraqis. I realised the need to make particular arrangements for what I called 'presentation' in order to ensure the continuing support of our people and allies, to impart to the enemy a specific impression we wanted him to have and for my command to feel it was well represented."[177]

On this type of approach, Fishman postulates, with some merit, that the reporter-official connection makes news an important tool of government and other established authorities. If in a wartime situation the government/military control access to the actual field of conflict (such as embedded reporters in Iraq 2003) and also control the briefings behind the lines, then the chances are that government sources will get a healthy per cent of favourable words and pictures into its national, and perhaps international, media, television in particular.[178] The embedded reporter system, in which selected reporters were given unprecedented access to the front line in Iraq 2003, stemmed from the 1991 Gulf War when reporters complained they were denied access to the battlefields of Kuwait when allied troops were busy routing Saddam Hussein's army.[179] In contrast to journalists in 1991, those

[176] Ibid, p.304. Hamilton & Jenner put the annual salary and support costs of maintaining a newspaper foreign correspondent at well over $250,000., with networks paying easily over double that and with a production team accompanying the reporter raising that amount even higher.
[177] Smith, General Sir Rupert, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, London: Allen Lane (2005),p.245.
[178] In the Iraq 2003 a key feature of the media coverage was the "embedding" of news teams with military front-line units. This meant that unlike Iraq 1991, news teams could sent back via satellite action as it was happening rather than relying on military news teams. These "embedded" news teams lived with the troops and were part of their unit.
[179] Beck, Sara & Downing, Malcolm (eds), *The Battle for Iraq* (London: BBC, 2003), p.p.16 and BBC News Online, *How 'embedded' reporters are handling the war,* 25 March, 2003.

embedded reporters in 2003 ate and slept alongside the soldiers and, through satellite reporting, brought live action from the battle to the front rooms of the world. Their reporting was restricted to comments on general troop strength and casualty figures and broad information about previous combat actions. Official "minders" were with them at all times. This dissertation looks at this both through examining primary source material from reporters who covered the conflicts and also through interviews, taking into account the desire of any professional journalist to actually witness events on which he or she was reporting but, also the limits which may have been imposed – political, military, economic and technological, all of which may have curtailed the media coverage in drastic ways.[180].

Compared to newspaper reporters, television reporters have less autonomy in the selection of stories, but there is a greater likelihood that television reporters' stories will appear as the reporters have prepared them, especially if they are a live broadcast.[181] Newspaper reporters deal mainly in words and still pictures and are not involved in the technical and time consuming constrictions of TV – filming, transmitting video via satellite, editing, scripting and so on.

Fishman's contention is also supported by Banz who comments that when sources and reporters have interacted for an extended period or where sources have great power over reporters, the interaction between sources and reporters may become routine as a non-conflict reaction. This is often the case when reporters on beats build long-term relationships – e.g., the police reporter "goes native" or the political reporter becomes a political actor.[182] Even more so it may well apply to a greater

[180] Allan, Stuart & Zelizer, Barbie (eds), *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.5. For example, the editors in their Introduction highlight the dilemma faced by a journalist when their own citizenship, or even patriotism, may call into question his or her perceptions of how best to conduct oneself as a reporter.
[181] Ibid, p.36
[182] Bantz. C, 'News organisations: Conflict as a Crafted Cultural Norm', in Berkowitz (ed). Also Schudson, M., 'The Sociology of News Production', in Bennett, W. Lance & Entman, Robert M. (eds), *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.13. Schudson states unequivocally that the reporter-official connection makes news an important tool of government and other established authorities.

extent in a wartime situation as will be outlined from primary source material in this dissertation's empirical chapters.

Smith, McCarthy, McPhail and Augustyn, in an agenda-building study looking at media coverage of protest movements in Washington D.C, also refer to government/reporter relationships and comment that editors favour reporters who are generalists rather than specialists as generalists are cheaper to hire, easier to control and more reliant on official sources of information for their stories.[183] This makes news gathering cheaper and the story turnover on a news desk faster; it may also make it easier for a government to build a favourable agenda in a time of conflict when dealing with general reporters rather than defence or political specialist correspondents, a point of view reviewed in the analytical section.

Hargreaves makes a similar point when he writes that one senior public relations executive revealed that the journalists he dealt with tended mainly to be young and not experienced and were stretched by the number of deadlines they were running against.[184] He adds that thinly-resourced newspapers and broadcast newsrooms become dependent on intermediaries such as government information officers, often reproducing gratefully whatever ready-made material comes their way, reflecting "the quickly sub-edited press release, or even the non-edited version, can be inspected any day in thousands of publications."[185] With newspaper, TV and radio news bulletins now prepared on computer no double-keyboarding is involved in quickly cutting and pasting a government press release into the bulletin, with the pressures of deadlines allowing (as Hargreaves comments) more of the government point-of-view in than may be healthy. This, in essence, is the media acting as an information gatekeeper, yet not opening and shutting the gate to select

[183] Smith. Jackie, McCarthy. John D, McPhail. Clark, Augustyn. Boguslaw, 'From Protest to Agenda Building: Description Bias in Media Coverage of Protest Events in Washington D.C., *Social Forces,* Vol. 79 Issue 4 (June 2001), p.1401.
[184] Hargreaves, p.181.
[185] Ibid, p.182.

sources for publication but negligently leaving it wide open (or at least partly ajar).[186]

2.9. The pressures on objective reporting

This then brings into question the objectivity of the journalist and whether lack of resources and deadline pressures, combined with the ease of access to government information may affect that "gate-keeping" role. Herman and Chomsky put forward the assertion that the elite domination of the media and the marginalisation of dissidents occurs so naturally that the media are able to convince themselves that they are operating objectively and on the basis of professional news values.[187] Robertson writes that reporters may, lazily, tend to use the same sources as each other or go back unthinkingly to those they have used before.[188] Perloff, in his study *The Dynamics of Persuasion*, examines the conflicts between *authority* and *credibility* underlining that they are not the same, defining credibility as a psychological or interpersonal communication construct. He postulates that authorities frequently influence others through *compliance* with individuals, in the case of this study, journalists, agreeing or publishing the authority view in order to gain specific rewards (access to further information or sources).[189] Golan, in his study of inter-media agenda setting makes the point that understanding what factors shape the media's international news agenda is important, considering the potential effect of news coverage on public perceptions of national and international

[186] McQuail, Denis, *McQuail's Reader in Mass Communication Theory* (London: Sage, 2002), p.500. In connection with the "gatekeeper" role of the media, that is selection of what is to be published, McQuail refers to the "unwitting bias" arising from the media relying on official authoritative sources. White (1950) applied this theory of information flowing through "gate areas" where decisions are made in his study of the actions of a telegraph wire editor who had the authority to discard or pass material for publication. Further work was done by Hirsch (1977) and Shoemaker (1991), the latter pointing out that "gatekeeping in the media is not a simple concept with the flow of news involving several social and institutional factors, including sources, advertisers, interest groups and government..

[187] Herman, Edward S. & Chomsky, Noam, *Manufacturing Consent* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), p.1.

[188] Robertson, p.476.

[189] Perloff, pp152-159.

affairs.[190] Understanding and analysing what role a government plays in shaping these factors is a key part of this dissertation.

The Glasgow Media Group, in a series of analyses of the media, take the view that "government" ideas positively pushed forward via the media are not "unwelcome propaganda". Ideology, in the group's view, is not some set of alien ideas imposed, propaganda-like upon willing and unwilling hearers; rather it is a representation of sets of events or facts that constantly favours the perceptual framework of one group, which could be the "official source." This source may have built up a long-standing relationship with the "beat" or specialist reporter who on a daily basis taps that system for information which that reporter needs to carry out the job and compete in the pages, on the air or on the screen to win space for his or her speciality, be it defence, politics, environment or any such area demanding some level of expertise and familiarity. Rodriguez refers to a reporter "losing favour" with an editor if he or she misses a story or an angle of a story other media competitors have published and, in the case of government sources these sources can put pressure on a reporter who has not "toed the line" by not returning phone calls of granting other news facilities such as interviews.[191]

So, here are different examples of how government news reaches the media – Hargreaves referring to less experienced journalists and the pressure of deadlines, the Glasgow Media Group pointing to the long-standing relationships with the government "source", Rodriguez revealing to the internal pressure within the media to outbid competitors, but at the possible price of allowing the government source to exert unwarranted pressure on reporters and Perloff hinting at compliance for future gain.[192] These are all elements which need to be examined and particular

[190] Golan, Guy, 'Inter Media Agenda Setting and Global News Coverage', *Journalism Studies* (Vol. 7, No. 2, 2006), p.330.
[191] Rodriguez, America, 'Control Mechanisms of National Newsmaking', in Downing, John, Mohammadi, Ali and Sreberny-Mohammadi (eds), *Questioning the Media* London: Sage, 1995), p.135.
[192] Perloff (pp.159-160) states that you can be an authority without credibility – Saddam Hussein was a supreme authority but privately many of his citizens did not find him credible. Credibility, Perloff proposes, is a communication variable and part of a two-way interaction between the communicator

consideration needs to be made of the point made by Swanson in reference to politicians making use of strategies to manipulate journalists in order to gain favourable coverage thought to be necessary for political success.[193]

Taking all of the points above there is, in certain cases, an accepted benefit for both sides, media and government. For example specialist reporters, such as UK national media defence correspondents, do get privileged briefings but with the *quid pro quo* of accepting the rules that the briefings are "unattributable" and not naming sources.[194] Chris Bellamy, the *Independent's* defence correspondent during the 1991 Gulf War, writes that he was "quite happy" to accept these restrictions but if so it may be that the general public loses out in terms of "collusion" between government and media. Cockerell *et al* propose so in their book on Whitehall news "manipulation" when talking about Lobby correspondents who, they say, "are players in a sophisticated game of private briefings, official steers and all manner of guidance from civil servants whose instincts are not towards public disclosure".[195] Jerome Delay, the Associated Press Photographer of the Year 2003, and a front-line journalist in the Iraq 2003 War, puts the position of the lobby journalist more succinctly describing lobby journalists as ones who rely on what other people tell them rather than get the story first hand.[196] This aspect and the relationships between media and government sources will be examined in the empirical chapters.

Yet, bearing in mind the above criticism, the fact is that internal competition is fierce within a media organisation and a specialist has to deliver on a regular basis else the news editor becomes disenchanted with the reporter's performance.

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and message recipients. It is not a fixed point and earned by who you are or what you represent; it is a dynamic entity and can only be earned and maintained through effective communication.

[193] Swanson, p.53.

[194] Bellamy, Christopher, *Expert Witness: A Defence Correspondent's Gulf War 1990-91* (London: Brassey's, 1993), p.36.

[195] Cockerell, Michael, Hennessy, Peter & Walker, David: *Sources Close to the Prime Minister: Inside the hidden world of the news manipulators* (London: Macmillan, 1984), p.10.

[196] Sylvester, Judith & Huffmann, Suzanne, *Reporting from the Front* (USA: Roman & Littlefield, 2006), p.100.

Government media experts can, and do, take advantage of that internal competition to place advantageous and supportive stories, an example of proactive and sometimes aggressive, agenda building, and also deny stories to "non-co-operative media which were then fed to their rivals to "teach them a lesson."[197]

News talk occurs within a cultural framework which stresses its balance and impartiality. Yet, despite this, detailed analysis reveals that it consistently maintains and supports a cultural framework within which viewpoints favourable to the *status quo* are given *preferred* and *privileged* readings.[198] This dependency culture, in which the reporter relies more than he or she should on official sources and may therefore run short of critical analysis, will be examined in detail in this study.

2.10. The debate over media influence and its perceived effect on public opinion

Hammond makes a case that war and intervention since the Cold War have been driven by attempts on the part of Western leaders to recapture a sense of purpose and meaning.[199] The Vietnam War, with all its negative images of being a "bloody, dirty and messy affair" led to what Konstantinidou describes as "perception management" in succeeding conflicts, including the Falklands, Kosovo, Iraq 1991 and Iraq 2003 campaigns.[200] She looks at the two-fold nature of perception management which is founded on the exaltation of the technical supremacy of the West, identified with ideas of humanity and moral superiority in opposition to that of a dark, inhumane and morally inferior enemy – good versus evil.[201]

These differing points aside, Hammond does reflect that in the post-modern world from the 1990s onwards a more cooperative relationship developed between the

[197] Price,p.337.
[198] Glasgow Media Group, *More Bad News* (London, 1980), p.121-122.
[199] Hammond, Philip, *Media, War and Post Modernity* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2007), p11.
[200] Konstantinidou, Christina, 'Death, lamentation and the photographic representation of the Other during the Second Iraq War in Greek newspapers', *International Journal of Cultural Studies* (Vol. 10, No. 2, 2007), p.149.
[201] Ibid.

Western media and military compared with the overall pattern from Vietnam to the 1991 Iraq War.[202] In this Review of Literature many primary and secondary sources – government, military, academic and media – have been examined in order to test this contention within the confines of the dissertation's supplementary research questions.

Arguably the media, in particular, have great ability to shape mass opinion through framing issues in particular ways, limiting certain types of information in their reporting on public affairs. Hiebert points out that in this era of globalisation with satellite TV and the Internet people are less likely to accept a government's point of view because they have greater access to a larger variety of media. In referring to the Iraq 2003 War, he underlines that this was not only the case in his own country, USA, where more liberal views were challenging the Bush administration's, especially though the internet, but also in Arab states where the coverage of *Al-*Jazeera had a profound effect on Arab public opinion.[203] Moorcraft and Taylor, in their examination of the political impact of war reporting, underline this pointing out that although the BBC sent 200 of its people to the region, CNN fielded the same and the three major American networks of ABC, NBC and CBS sent some five hundred staff members to Kuwait, there were also the new regional media players in *Al-Arabiya, Abu Dhabi TV* and *Al-Jazeera.*

Therefore, we come into the realm of what Best, Chmielewski and Krueger describe as "selective exposure".[204] Their study revealed that individuals unhappy with the selective presentation of news which supported the Bush administration's policy in

[202] Hammond, p.44

[203] Hiebert, Ray Eldon, *Challenges for Arab and American public relations and public diplomacy in a global age,* a keynote address given "Public Relations in the Arab World in the Age of Globalization" at the University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, May 4, 2004. Hiebert quoted his University of Maryland colleague Professor Shibley Telhami, who conducted a survey with Zogby International in six Arab countries—Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates. He repeated the survey in 2003 and found in just two years, a huge increase in the use of satellite television. Egypt, for example, went from about 8–46%, and similar percentages of change were found in the other countries.

[204] Best, Samuel J., Chmielewski, Brian and Krueger, Brian S., 'Selective Exposure to Online Foreign News during the Conflict with Iraq', *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* (Vol. 52, No.10, 2005), p.55.

invading Iraq in 2003 turned to foreign news sources, diverging from the audience which supported the Bush policies and reporting of these policies in the media, accounts which conformed to their own political perceptions and other predispositions. Those opposed to the Bush policies, however, turned to foreign news sources since they had become psychologically uncomfortable with their own predispositions and turned to sources which more conformed to their own feelings.[205] Vincent Campbell refers to a significant shift in the US media patterns post 9/11 with a move away from criticism of the American media for being hyper-critical of government towards a "largely deferential, uncritical, conservative" treatment of national politics, particularly with regard to US foreign policy and the 2003 war on Iraq.[206] This policy is owner-driven, a policy dictated from a higher than editor level, such as the Murdoch-owned Fox empire.[207]

So, there can be a deliberate lack of journalistic objectivity at the owner/editor level which is planned and part of media group policy agenda supportive of a government stand and more subjective than objective. Yet there may be an unconscious barrier to objectivity at the lower, reporter, level for example the 2003 concept of embedded reporters, that is to say media who lived, ate, slept and moved with UK and US units during the lead-up to the war and the war itself and became part of these units. The whole concept of embedded reporting is analysed in the chapter on the Iraq 2003 war to examine who benefited most from the arrangement – government or media - and quotes cases of embedded reporters who later reflected that journalistic objectivity may have been compromised. However, in looking at a whole range of literature on embedded reporting – much of it first hand from media who participated in the programme – it may be worth taking the view of John Donvan, one of the non-embedded or unilateral reporters. He questions the effect of the "embedded" arrangement on objectivity and on ethical grounds in that he felt embedded journalists fell in love with "the glitz and glamour and whiz-bang of embedded reporting" which puts so much emphasis on the action

[205] Ibid.
[206] Campbell, Vincent, p.10.
[207] Ibid, p.11.

that it led to the public forget they were seeing only a tiny slice of the war and not the war itself.[208] This point is also examined in the Iraq 2003 chapter through personal interviews, primary source accounts and other analysis.

Since 1996 Nik Gowing has been a main programme anchor for BBC World 24 and his reports were also featured on BBC One and BBC New 24's bulletins during the Iraq 2003 conflict. He refers to the "proliferation of images" which was broadcast in "instantaneous real time" in the 2003 war, often before the official machinery of government or the military structure even knew anything had happened.[209] This is a particularly interesting point which will raised into in this dissertation's Iraq 2003 chapter with reference to the "embedded journalist" process where the argument will be presented that "image", that is to say real-time television pictures broadcast from the front line without any apparent military censorship, may have captured public perception to the detriment of journalistic analysis. The result may well have aided UK government media agenda building rather than promoting objective media analysis.

In 1956, Eden did not have the proliferation of TV images to deal with but in his era, as Kyle notes in his book on the Suez affair, he was an avid scanner of the newspaper clippings and reacted to them (often in anger) to try and force them into supporting his own agenda.[210]

We now have decades of research, arguably often contradictory and inconclusive, that demonstrate how media influence mass opinion, but it is important to keep in mind that mass opinion can be swayed because it is – at base and in the main – unstable and superficial.[211] It is this mass opinion sector's instability and superficiality that enable less scrupulous media to use its influence for political or

[208] Hall, Jane, 'The Fire Next Time: Fighting the Next War', *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* (Vol. 9, No. 3, 2004, pp.76-86), p.83.
[209] Gowing, Nik, *The Alistair Berkley Memorial Lecture* (London: London School of Economics, May 21st, 2003).
[210] Kyle, p.125.
[211] Entman, Robert. M. & Herbst, Susan *Reframing Public Opinion as We Have Known*, p.207.

commercial gain, although there is an opposite view to this. Enzenberger speculates that with the development of the modern media (such as the internet, it could be proposed), for the first time in history the media make it possible for the participation of the masses with the practical means of expression being in the hands of the masses themselves.[212] Baudrillard poses the question "Do the media neutralize meaning and produce informed or uninformed masses, or is it the masses that victoriously resist the media by directing or absorbing all the messages that the media produce without responding to them?"[213]

Both Enzenberger and Baudrillard raise an intriguing point on this opposite view of mass media-mass opinion interaction, a point of view which is worth keeping in mind while concentrating on the government-media interface and interaction, which is the subject of this study. In this context, Hargreaves voices his consent and those of other concerned journalists when he writes that the greater concentration of corporate ownership of the news media is "cutting budgets and undermining journalistic integrity, giving advertisers and sponsors unwarranted influence over news agendas.[214] Rupert Murdoch, with his massive international media interests, urges an increase in cross-media ownership since it increases investment and is, therefore, "a force for diversity".[215] By investment, he means profit and that could favour advertisers at the expense of editorial objectivity as happened at the launch of Murdoch's Sky Television in 1989 when his own newspapers gave a disproportionate coverage to the launch, only the journalists on one of his newspapers – *The Times* – making a formal protest which, the same paper's independent directors *refused to investigate.*[216] Former BBC *Panorama* editor

[212] Enzenberger, Hans Magnus, 'Constituents of a Theory of the Media', *The Consciousness Industry* (New York, USA: Seabury Press, 1974), p.97.
[213] Baudrillard, Jean, 'In the Most Complete Ambiguity: Requiem for the Media,', *Journal of Baudrillard Studies* (Vol.4, No. 1, January 2007), p.8
[214] Hargreaves, Ian. *Journalism: Truth or Dare?* (Oxford University Press, 2003), p.13.
[215] Curran, James & Seaton, Jean, *Power without Responsibility* (London: Routledge, 2003), p.394.
[216] Ibid, p.81.

Roger Bolton also casts doubts about the integrity of media organizations whom he postulates may not report themselves as freely as they report other groups.[217]

Nevertheless, the *idea* that the mass media play a pivotal part in the nexus of power relations in society is by now largely accepted by most communications researchers, irrespective of theoretical differences.[218] Entman and Herbst point out that *activated* public opinion provides a better and more productive target for agenda building. These are the opinions of engaged, informed and organized citizens – those who can be mobilised during campaign periods and between elections as well. Political science tells us who these citizens are: party loyalists, local community activists, interest group spokespersons, opinion leaders and others who play close attention to the political realm. Policymakers have long heeded activated public opinion because it is *the* public opinion that matters most often in day-to-day policy making.[219] Unlike mass opinion which is most likely to be swayed by the mass media, highly-educated and engaged citizens are often most resistant to messages that run counter to their belief systems. It was this group, activated public opinion, which was the main target of the Clinton camp in the 1992 Presidential election. Clinton was campaigning as an agent of change, an agenda which identified more closely with the registered voters since his campaign managers had recognized this and had highlighted the issues this group was concerned about – jobs, the economy and reforming health care. The campaign managers enjoyed success by issuing press releases to match the issue agenda of registered voters, winning the support of this activated public opinion group.[220] In terms of targeting this *activated public opinion*, it is worth noting that in targeting one particular section another section can be omitted. Zayani and Ayish point out that the fall of Baghdad in 2003 was not framed in the Arab media as the end of a dictatorship and the advent of democracy, but as a "momentous event that heralds

[217] Bolton, Roger, 'The Problems of Making Political Television', in Golding, Peter, Murdock, Graham & Schlesinger, Philip (eds), Communicating Politics: Mass communications and the political process (USA: Leicester University Press, 1986), p.96.
[218] Blumler, Jay G. & Gurevitch, Michael, 'Journalists' Orientations to Political Institutions: the Case for Parliamentary Broadcasting', in Golding et al, p.67.
[219] Entman & Herbst, p.207.
[220] Walter, Walters & Gray, pp.17-18.

yet another episode of Arab defeat and humiliation."[221] This apparent lapse in UK agenda building will be reviewed in this dissertation's empirical chapters, a lapse which is underlined by one of the UK Ministry of Defence's press officers Lieutenant Commander Steve Tatham who claims that the campaign to win over the Arab media failed and that it never even got off the drawing board, a view examined in the Iraq 2003 empirical chapter.[222]

2.11. Summary

Agenda building, being the proactive tool that it is, does not ignore potential support, including latent public opinion, which can be reactivated after a policy debate has progressed. Entman and Herbst make the point that the most successful leaders are those who can use experience and political instinct to sense latent opinion – who understand the dynamics of public opinion beneath the discursive chaos brought on by polls, canvas returns and dissident party colleagues.[223]

Yet we must consider that agenda building by a government makes use of all areas of potential support, not exclusively through the media, although the media is a prime target to get over any policy initiatives and through the media to the various publics, for example in reactivating or mobilising latent public opinion. In an analysis of elite perceptions of public opinion Kull and Ramsay conclude that "most commonly, policy practitioners seemed to feel that they could get a sense of public attitudes by reading standard news reporting." [224] That could be extended to 24-hour TV reporting and from the 1991 Iraq War emerged the so-called CNN Effect in which the introduction of new technology such as satellite transmission brought a new immediacy to news coverage. New technologies appeared to reduce the

[221] Zayani & Ayish, p.475.
[222] Tatham, Steve, *Losing Arab Hearts and Minds* (London: Hurst & Company, 2006), p.10. Also interview with J.T. Campbell, September 12, 2007.
[223] Entman & Herbst, p.208.
[224] Robinson, P. The CNN Effect: The myth of news, foreign policy and intervention (London, Routledge: 2002), p.3.

scope for calm deliberation over policy, forcing policy-makers to respond to whatever issue journalists focused on.[225] On the other hand as Savigny and Marsden note in a case study of the Iraq 2003 War we do not witness events directly but rely on different media forms to provide us with information about events as they took place in the fields of war.[226] In this case, referring to journalists "embedded" with troops in the field (a concept which will be examined in detail in a later chapter) this compromised their ability to be objective and the televising of the war, fundamentally disconnecting the machinery of warfare from the bloody consequences of its use.[227] Both these examples are how the media can influence and shape reaction to the war, be it government or public.

During the review of literature this study has looked at the dynamics of the relationships between the media and the government in both the conflicts examined and has tried to tease out the essential elements of media/government relationships which would be a guide and convincing evidence in validating the main research question on the respective UK governments' approach towards agenda building in order to win media, and thus media-coverage influence on the UK public. Commenting on a later conflict, the current one in Afghanistan, McNally refers to the fact that in this conflict the "failings of the Ministry of Defence" in terms lack of equipment support for the troops on the ground, such as helicopter support, can be credited to the media.[228] However, the current Afghan conflict is a long-standing one; the two conflicts examined in this dissertation and the periods leading up to them when the UK governments of the time were trying to build up support for their agenda, were relatively short and in the Review of Literature the only examination is of material published which will help to resolve and underpin the main research question, and also material which may not, both views being essential to come to a balanced evidential conclusion in order to contribute,

[225] Ibid, p.7.
[226] Savigny, Heather & Marsden, Lee *Doing Political Science and International Relations:Theories in Action* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) p.155.
[227] Ibid, p.155.
[228] McNally, Steve, 'You go to war with the press you've got', *British Journalism Review* (Vol.21, No. 1, March 2010) p.34

hopefully, a new insight into government agenda building in both conflicts and lay a path for future research into this field.

Certainly there are vast differences in the media structure of the two periods being examined, as el-Nawawy and Powers expound when they write on the rise of mass-mediated conflict, remarking that the end of the 20th century witnessed dramatic changes in the structure, scope and depth of the media across the globe.[229] The scope of the literature examined has taken this difference fully into account, examining each government's attempts at constructing an agenda-building strategy within its own time framework, and further analysis will expand on this in the empirical chapters and in Conclusions. It can be argued that military assets alone now longer govern the outcome of international conflict with success or failure increasingly dependent on controlling the flow of information and the associated 'hearts and minds' of a country's people.[230]

It may follow then that for a government to build a successful agenda to win hearts and minds, does it have to convince the media and thus the public that the war is a 'just war'? In other words is it pursuing an 'ethical foreign policy'? Again, in the literature review this aspect has been examined, as Bully expounds, no matter how "ethical" or "right" a foreign policy which results in military intervention is, it produces suffering and death.[231] With today's instant media, suffering and death, such as the television pictures of the March 2011 tsunami in Japan, reach a worldwide audience, but in a conflict situation where there is a strong element of government control of the media the public access may be restricted to what the government of the day allows or persuades the media to release. The review of the relevant literature has examined this aspect and will expand on it in the empirical chapters and conclusions.

[229] El-Nawaway, Mohammed and Powers, Shawn, 'Al-Jazeera English: A conciliatory medium in a conflict-ridden environment?', *Global Media and Communication* (Vol. 6, No. 1, 2010) p.62.
[230] Ibid, p63.
[231] Bully, Dan, 'The politics of ethical foreign policy: A resaponsibility to protect whom?', *European Journal of International Relations* (Vol.16, No.3, 2010), p.441.

In the literature review there has been an intention to provide the background to and justification for the research carried out. There has also been an evaluation of primary and other research work, opinion, biographies and factual accounts in order to create a framework of questions which need to be challenged in order to justify the title of the dissertation and answer the research questions. From this body of research the intention here is to guide this study towards areas which are ripe for development and open to original research and thought in the hope that it can contribute original material to the field of government agenda building.

As set out earlier in this Review of Literature, Schlesinger says that media sociology has largely focused on how media organizations have made use of sources of information, rather than looking at how the sources have used their power to define and manage the flow of information - in other words, how they set about building their own agenda in the media through the provision and supply of that information on which the media may come to over rely on.[232]

The aim of this study is not to refute or disparage in any way previous literature on agenda building from the media's perspective. Instead, it aims to restore a balance in the research work by shifting the focus towards the area Schlesinger touches upon, that of the government agenda building through the use of the media.

[232] Blumler, p.62.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1. Background

This dissertation is a comparative case study split into two separate case studies with the linking theme being an examination of UK government media agenda-building in time of conflict and attempted regime change. It will examine the media agenda-building actions of the UK governments in power during the Suez crisis of 1956 and the Iraq war of 2003, focusing on government attempts to manage the media. The two conflicts have been picked since they both took place in the Middle East and both were military actions dedicated to regime change without the international sanction of a United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR), differing from the Iraq War of 1991 which had a UNSCR issued and gave legality to military action.[233] There is also the opportunity to study and compare the media-handling strategy, policy and actions in two eras where the media profiles were completely different, the UK in 1956 had only one BBC TV channel and a fledgling ITV, compared to the satellite age of 2003 and the multiplicity of worldwide channels.

Each of these two separate cases is examined through methodological tools comprising:

- Research of government or other archives (Detailed in the following Section 3.3).
- Examination of biographical, autobiographical and academic material on each of the conflicts.

[233] Kilfoyle, Peter, *Lies, damned lies and Iraq* (Petersfield, Hampshire: Harriman House, 2007), pp.172-174). Former Defence Minister in the first Blair government, Kilfoyle makes the point that regime change is illegal as a war aim in international law and produces evidence that Blair's aim was the removal of the Saddam Hussein government. In Suez 1956 that illegal use of force for regime change was also Eden's policy [Johnman, Lewis, 'Playing the Role of a Cassandra: Sir Gerald Fitzmaurice, Senior Legal Advisor to the Foreign Office', in Kelly, Saul & Gorst, Anthony (eds), *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis* (Abingdon, Oxon: Frank Cass), pp.46-48)].

- Interviews with government, military and media personnel involved in each of the conflicts, drawing on material gained through the above research
- Assessment through comparing and analysing the results of the interviews, using the process of Triangulation (detailed in Section 3.4) which Burnham et al note is increasingly used as a methodology in policy-based studies when a range of evidence has to be integrated into a coherent explanation.[234]

Here is set down the methodology employed to analyse UK government media agenda building in the two conflicts – Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003 – and to examine how the UK governments during those periods sought to win support through influencing the media and, through them, the people. This chapter will contrast the various methodologies considered and will explain the choice of a case-study methodology which, it is contended, is context-sensitive, objective and evidence-led.

In gathering information various methods have been employed: in-depth personal interviews with government officials and media involved in both the Iraq conflicts, archival research in the National Archives to examine declassified government documents, archival research in the Bodleian Library and other libraries to examine the memoirs, correspondence and diaries of politicians and military personnel involved in the Suez 1956 conflict; secondary analysis of books, memoirs and articles of media personnel, politicians and military figures involved in the Iraq conflict; and academic books and articles analysing the conflicts and commenting on the interaction between the media and UK government and military in time of conflict. More specifically, two UK governments' attempts at agenda building were examined in order to analyse how they attempted to win media support for their political/military objectives in time of conflict and substantial internal dissention to

[234] Burnham, Peter, Lutz, Karin Gilland, Grant, Wyn & Layton-Henry, Zig *Research Methods in Politics* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.334.

any military action and also to observe the media's reaction to each government's media-handling policy.

In a case-study approach Rathbun recommends intensive, in-depth interviews which can help to establish motivations and preferences with people who have lived through the events being examined.[235] In addition what was used was a system of *Triangulation* in the analysis, seeking at least three confirmations to determine, for example, whether a statement from an interviewee could be seen as:

- Subjective or objective,
- Factual or alleged,
- Truth or an opinion.[236]

Colleagues working in the same field may disagree with the findings and interpretive analysis, but can respect the methodology used, a methodology, which if replicated by them should, more or less, come up with the same raw data if not the same analytical conclusions. As Ma and Norwich state, the purpose of triangulation is to "increase the validity of a study by seeking the degree of agreement in the investigation outcome from the use of multiple methods and measurement procedures."[237]

3.2. Doing archival research

This study has examined substantial primary source material, be it declassified records in the National Archives, Kew, or existing interviews with key personnel who took part in the Suez 1956 affair, held at the Kings College Library, London.

[235] Rathbun, Brian C.,Interviewing and qualitative field methods: Pragmatism and practicalities, in Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Brady, Henry E., and Collier, David (eds)*The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology* (Oxford; Oxford University Press), p.690.
[236] Perlesz, Amaryll & Lindsay, Jo, 'Methodological triangulation in researching families: making sense of dissonant data', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* (Vol. 6, No1, 2003), p.25.
[237] Ma, Agnes & Norwich, Bram, 'Triangulation and Theoretical Understanding', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* (Vol. 10, No. 3, July 2007), p.211.

These Suez interviews were examined not only through transcripts, but also through listening to tape recordings of the interviews carried out by the authors of the Suez Oral History Project.[238] Declassified material with regard to Iraq 2003 is, of course, unavailable under the 30-year rule and examination of declassified government records in 2033 are anxiously awaited by researchers. However access to government records was granted though the Foreign and Commonwealth Office permission. In addition, through the Ministry of Defence, interview access was given to Civil Service and Army media handling staff who took part in both the Iraq 1991 and 2003 conflicts. Colleagues who follow this case study approach in the future when Iraq 2003 government records become available may record the changing status of the case selected here when new evidence appears giving new insights.[239] Research, after all, is about discovery, not simply the verification or falsification of static hypotheses but a perfect research design cannot be constructed without a specific hypothesis.[240]

A three-case study may become a two-case study, which is exactly what happened in this dissertation.[241] Originally included in this dissertation's research was a case study of the 1991 Iraq War but this was later rejected on the grounds that this conflict, unlike Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003, had a UNHCR mandate for military action and the military forces involved against Iraq included Arab nations as well as Western forces.

In the two-case study research which remained great emphasis was placed on the examination of primary sources without excluding other texts such as academic biographies and analytical papers. Hopkin notes that qualitative research of a smaller number of cases is often regarded as a methodologically 'soft' option

[238] Scot Lucas, W., & Gorst, Anthony, *Papers of the Suez Oral History Project* (London: Kings College, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives).
[239] Gerring, John, 'Case selection for case study analysis,' in Box-Steffensmeier et al, p.677.
[240] Ibid, pp.677-678.
[241] Ibid. p.678.

inherently less rigorous than quantitative analysis.[242] However, he contends that there is no *a priori* reason to regard case-orientated, qualitative-comparative research as methodologically 'soft', and indeed this approach can provide a far more rigorous and sophisticated response to some types of research questions. This case-study methodology sits well with this dissertation, it is proposed, since it involves precise examination of secondary and primary source material. In secondary texts such as academic biographies and analytical papers the knowledge gained is inevitably filtered through the interpretation of the author but researching primary source documents (such as government records held at the National Archives) enables one to step more directly into the past.[243] Other primary source documents examined include:

- Books and articles written by journalists who have covered the two conflicts which are the subject of this study
- Memoirs, diaries and personal correspondence of government officials and former Ministers held at a variety of academic locations including the Bodleian Library, Oxford, University of Southampton and Kings College, University of London (a full list of sources is set out in the Bibliography).[244]
- Library sources, including the U.S. Presidential Libraries at Abilene (Dwight D. Eisenhower) and New York (Franklin D. Roosevelt).

It should be noted here that the U.S. government policy often declassifies material before the 30-year limit which is UK government policy and cross-checking with US

[242] Hopkin, Jonathan, 'The Comparative Method' in Marsh, David & Stoker, Gerry (eds), *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) p.300.
[243] Jones, Harriet, 'Interpreting Documents', in Catterall, Peter & Jones, Harriet (eds) *Understanding Documents and Sources* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1994), p.5.
[244] In examining the personal diaries and papers mentioned here it is understood that the authors may have their opinions on events in which they took part which may disagree with contemporaries who had a hand in the same events. Therefore an on-going reflexivity stance throughout the research has been employed. For example in examining the personal papers of three of the key government figures involved in the 1956 Suez affair – William Clark, Sir Anthony Eden's Press Secretary, Lord Monckton, his Minister of Defence and Earl Mountbatten, his First Sea Lord –this dissertation compared and contrasted the differing views of specific events. In addition, the research employed involved counter checking these events through examination of government papers held at the National Archives in Kew.

sources on matters of mutual UK-USA foreign and intelligence policy can reveal information still held back on this side of the Atlantic. In the case of the UK, government-employed historians produced *Documents on British Foreign Policy* which may cover particular - and more important - issues in defence of the UK's conduct of foreign policy. However, it must be borne in mind that these contain selected documents and the full set of official papers must be consulted at the National Archives where some may still be held back because of government secrecy restrictions.[245] This is still the case with the Suez Crisis of 1956 where some documents are still classified "secret" and remain a "live study" and analysis and research elsewhere can only speculate what is contained.[246] Rathbun notes that in all of the above areas examined a good scholar will read not only the qualitative work in his or her field, but also the quantitative, the latter being a source of hypotheses and an indication of what is yet to be explored.[247]

Johnson-Cartree and Copeland make the point that the flow and control of information is at the root of power and for that reason the management of information is a carefully-guarded domain within organisational structures and a heavily-analysed process.[248] At the National Archives records of the Prime Minister's Office, the special Suez Committee of selected Cabinet Ministers and military chiefs formed to head the policy with regard to Suez, the Cabinet Office, Ministry of Defence and other military groups such as the Chiefs of Staff were all examined. In each case the methodology employed involved cross-checking and confirming information which was noted down in the minutes of one, compared with the minutes of another as was also done with the autobiographies, personal papers and diaries of those government and military leaders who were involved in these events along with academic works of analysis.

[245] Young, John W., 'Diplomatic Documents', (in Catterall & Jones), p.10.
[246] Easton, Geoff, *Learning from Case Studies* (London: Prentice-Hall International, 1982), p.3. Also, historians can apply for access to still classified documents as has been done successfully for the Suez Crisis chapter in this dissertation.
[247] Rathbun, p.696.
[248] Johnson-Cartree and Copeland, p.183.

In dealing with UK government agenda-building there may be an overlapping of what can be described as media-handling by some, and what might be construed as propaganda by others. However, in terms of the use of propaganda, as well as intelligence and defence matters and the question of how a state defends its case and manipulates opinion in its favour, UK governments are selective about what they place in the National Archives, necessitating a search for other sources.[249] These sources can include the personal papers of a political figure since those relating to their private family lives can offer otherwise inaccessible insights into the hidden sides of public lives.[250] Nevertheless, these must be viewed with caution since political figures may be, several years after the events examined, selective in their memories therefore cross checking, triangulation, is a constant need for the researcher.

Such documentary sources, as outlined above, are the raw material of the historian whose interpretation of the past is conducted through a careful sifting of many documents of varying kinds.[251] In perusing such documentation, analysing and comparing, questions were prepared for the primary source interviews planned. At this stage the evidence gathered was not taken at face value since each piece of evidence needed to be judged critically and dispassionately.[252]

As a final point on this section, when examining official documents at the National Archives, the absence of items from a political agenda can reveal a lot about the distribution of power in society. A truly adequate account of decision-making should take into account "non-decision making". Continuity is as important as shifts of policy.[253] Similarly, looking at the seniority of government and military personnel attending a meeting normally attended by more junior officials, then examining the minutes of the meeting which do not seem to merit the more senior attendance, one

[249] Young, p.12.
[250] Brivati, Brian, 'Private Papers', (in Catterall & Jones), p.20.
[251] Jones, p.5.
[252] Ibid, p.6.
[253] Greenaway, J., Smith, S., & Street, J., *Deciding Factors in British Politics: A case-studies approach* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.12.

can extrapolate that some content has been held back on "national security" grounds. This gives a clue to look elsewhere for the missing content – the personal papers, diaries and letters of those who attended the meeting in question.[254]

Burnham et al underline the great opportunities for political scientists to develop novel accounts and interpretations of significant events through the examination of archival sources and the workings of the state as revealed in these sources but add, as a caveat, that other sources of information may usefully compliment this approach and detail the limitations of documentary records.[255]

3.3. Towards a case study approach

On the subject of multiple methods, in employing a methodology which was best suited to this research several schools were reviewed, including Positivism, Interpretivism, Pluralism and Case Studies. It is not proposed to go through each in detail here but this study will concentrate on what can be seen as a way of working which produces and validates the data unearthed. For that a system was needed which was flexible enough to cope with the three main disciplinary themes being dealt with – media, politics and contemporary history – and which would be evidence-led. Therefore, what was adopted was a means of data collection from the various disciplines through a methodology involved the examination of official records, evaluation with empirical evidence and semi-structured one-to-one interviews. Much use was made of the JSTOR database since political science is increasingly making use of databases that are available on the internet.[256] Case study research is richly descriptive because it is grounded in deep and varied sources of information employing quotes from key participants, anecdotes and

[254] Campbell, J.T., *Failures in Foreign Office intelligence gathering, assessment and analysis: Tito-Stalin split 1948* (MA dissertation, Birkbeck College, University of London, 2002).
[255] Burnham et al, p.208
[256] Box-Steffensmeier et al, Political Science Methodology in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, p.16

narratives composed from original and primary source interviews.[257] It involves collecting and analysing information from multiple sources and, in addition creates opportunities for the researcher to explore additional questions through the act of investigating a topic in detail through using multiple sources of information.[258]

Research for this dissertation employed the same principles as investigating the natural world with only admissible evidence as "facts" through personal observation which Deacon et al regard as "over-simplified".[259] Yet in the methodology "facts" were interpreted as "information" which has to be sifted and analysed with the idea that the more sources consulted the more likely it is that omissions will show up and that discrepancies in dates, times, places and the people involved can be resolved.[260] As Ellis and Bochner state: "The major way in which we detect distortion and correct for it, is *by comparing an informant's account with the accounts given by other informants.*"[261] Brannen makes a broad spectrum contention in comparing qualitative and quantitative approaches to research, often seen as fundamentally different paradigms but in the practical evaluation of policy in the United Kingdom and the United States, and increasingly in Europe, there is a whole industry devoted to the utilisation of both methods.[262] However researchers in comparative politics and related fields, such as in this study, often seek to identify commonalities across cases, focusing on a relatively small number of purposefully selected cases.[263]

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[257] Hancock, Dawson R., & Algozzine, Bob, *Doing Case Study Research* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2011) p.16.
[258] Ibid, p.16.
[259] Deacon, D. Pickering, M. Golding, P. and Murdock, G., *Researching Communications: A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis* (London: Arnold, 1999), p.3.
[260] Ibid, pp.29-30.
[261] Ellis, C. and A.P. Bochner. 200. "Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject," *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* 2nd edition, ed. N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds), (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage (DATE). p.739.
[262] Brannen, Julia, 'Mixing Methods: The Entry of Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches into the Research Process', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* (Vol. 8, No. 3, July 2005), p.173.
[263] Rihoux, Benoit, 'Case-orientated configurational research,' in Box-Steffensmeier et al, p.723.

This study, therefore, takes the above points as the foundation for a good working case-study template, drawing from several research traditions in terms of reflexivity. Hamel *et al* reflect that the case study has been roundly criticised for its reliance on common sense. However, no such complaints were made about the fact that the set of empirical materials from which all such sociological studies proceed include, to various extents, meanings social actors assign to their own social experiences.[264] These "meanings" have been extracted in the one-to-one interviews carried out but they should also emerge in autobiographical accounts and other written material researched.[265] Rathbun observes that in the case study methodology the examination of archives and memoirs might provide some insight into these factors, such as how key individuals were thinking about events and their motivation, but interviewing is unique in that it allows the interviewer to ask the questions that he or she wants answered. Memoirs and secondary accounts would be more indirectly established than in interviewing.[266]

Certainly in terms of the one-to-one interviews carried out for this dissertation, both the ones carried out by the author for the Iraq 2003 chapter, and those recorded for the Suez Oral History Project, these interviews preserve the perspective of the individual in order to capture and preserve their spoken judgements and recollections.[267] The interviews were supplemented by news reports, official documents, personal writings and literary works since a case study considers materials of different origins.[268] Burnham *et al* stress that reflection on method is one of the hallmarks of the discipline separating the academic study of politics from political journalism and that method is intrinsically linked to research findings such as interviews, analysis of documents and archives.[269]

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[264] Hamel, J., Dufour, S., & Fortin, D., *Case Study Methods* (London: Sage, 1993), p.31.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Rathbun, in Box-Steffensmeier et al, p.691.
[267] Lofgren, Stephen J., *U.S. Army Guide to Oral History* (Washington D.C: Centre of Military History United States Army, 2006), p.iv.
[268] Ibid, p.45.
[269] Burnham *et al,* p.1.

As with Hamel, Yin defends the case study and criticises its "stereotype" as a weak sibling among social science methods, although he warns that case study methods will be challenged from "rational (and irrational) perspectives" and that the insights gained from case studies may be underappreciated.[270] It can only be stressed that this study is not employing a purely social science methodology but, as outlined above, a case study model more suited to an interdisciplinary project. Yin remarks that there is a striking paradox in that if a case study method has serious weaknesses, why do investigators continue to use it, including many distinguished scholars, including a few of who have served as heads of their respective professions?[271]

In the selected case studies, Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003, it is intended to make a comparative study of cases which are as different as possible in terms of the independent variables – the limited media in 1956 compared to the more electronic media in 2003, the different governments (Conservative 1956 and Labour 2003), a still UK colonial power in 1956 and a no-longer world dominant country in 2003. However, the commonality of the cases examined is the dependent or "intervening" variable, that of a government attempting to win media support and, hopefully public support, for attempted regime change. The case study methodology here means that any observed differences between the cases with respect to the dependent variable can be associated with the only variable or variables that makes the cases different: the independent variable.[272]

3.4. The use of personal experience by a researcher

A researcher who is not able to stand back from the specialist knowledge s/he has acquired, and whose perspective becomes indistinguishable from that of the host culture, may face analytical problems.[273] Yet, there is surely an advantage in being

[270] Yin, Robert K., *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (London: Sage, 2003), p.xiii.
[271] Ibid
[272] Burnham *et al,* p.75.
[273] Coffey, Amanda (1999), *The Ethnographic Self* (London: Sage, 1999), p.23.

totally familiar with the host culture/cultures; in the case of this dissertation the host cultures being examined are government information handling, involving both military and Civil Service personnel, and the media that this government information machine are trying to influence.

In the carrying out of productive fieldwork interviews, familiarity with the different systems – government and media – can aid the one-to-one interactions and relationships developed in the interviews. Coffey remarks that it is impossible to undertake fieldwork without entering into the interactions with significant others. Moreover, she observes that it is wrong to assume that the input and output of these interactions will be one-way. We should not even think about undertaking qualitative fieldwork without being prepared to become part of the interactions of the setting.[274]

Inside knowledge of both government information handling and journalistic practice gives one a distinct advantage in the conduct of such one-to-one interviews. Indeed, Mykhalovskiy argues that personal experience present in the text can be a source of insightful analysis and that autobiographical writing reacts against the insularity of intellectual, academic or disciplinary writing.[275] An author's *personal experience* within the text is a useful tool in extracting primary source material during fieldwork interviews, and also in challenging published accounts or analysis where not only personal experience rejects the accuracy of such accounts, but such rejection is confirmed through *triangulation*, a concept raised in the Introduction and to be outlined in greater detail in the next section. Rubin makes the point that interviewees are more likely to commit sins of omission rather than commission, avoiding deliberate falsehoods and attempting to steer the conversation to other aspects of the subject.[276] "Inside knowledge" of the field being investigated in an interview, and the intensive research carried out before the

[274] Hammersley, p.133.
[275] Mykhalovskiy, E. (1997) 'Reconsidering "table talk": critical thoughts on the relationship between sociology, autobiography and self indulgence', in R. Herz (ed), *Reflexivity and voice*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage), p.133.
[276] Rubin, p.694.

interview stage – memoirs, archives, secondary source analysis - it is suggested, can help detect any omission and steer the interview in the direction of extracting primary source material.

3.5 Interdisciplinary model and triangulation

Green postulates that in this type of research questions will be raised about the role of the media in the processes of social conflict and historical change, metacommunication promoting a critical awareness of the ends of mass communication in society.[277] This study, of course, is mainly government-orientated in terms of media agenda building, but reflexivity is key to extracting opinions on the success or otherwise of this agenda building by examining and re-examining the data collected, particularly in terms of what material emerges from the primary source one-to-one interviews. Material from initial interviews certainly provided questions for those following later and these questions may have prompted different answers in an interview than those given by the same subject in previous autobiographical or other written material. “Insider” knowledge of the field not only helps one frame the questions in advance of the interview but also to change or adapt questions in the interview itself without reference to a written brief taking into account the following points as safeguards and cross checking data:

- Do we have the complete picture?
- Can we follow the actual sequence of how data was collected, processed and displayed for specific conclusion drawing?
- Is there a record of the study’s methods and procedures detailed enough to be followed as an “audit trail”?

[277] Green Michael, ‘Media, education and communities’, in Jensen & Jankowski, p.225.

- Has the researcher been explicit and as self-aware as possible about personal assumptions, values and biases, affective states – and how they may have come into play during the study?[278]
- Were competing hypotheses or rival conclusions really considered and do rival conclusions seem plausible?[279]

Consideration of reflexivity was therefore important for this study's research, in terms of being aware of the ways in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and the process of actually doing that research. This reflexivity and interaction at fieldwork interview level is key to the study's methodology.

The one-to-one interview structure employed in this case-sturdy research is described in Section 3.6. These interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format which is more conducive to extracting qualitative information. Key to this is the process of triangulation in order to compare omissions and biases in the varying accounts – oral, autobiographical, biographical or historical analysis - in order to build up the most accurate account possible, resolving any contradictions in dates, times, places and intent.[280] Savigny and Marsden also propose that reflexivity is a key component in analysis in political science research since politics is broadly defined and characterised by "grey areas" and multiple comparisons of data/information are essential.[281] Here, multiple data-collection methods may be used as a check on observational findings.[282] Dent used this semi structured

[278] Note: Pfetch and Esser in commenting on comparative research make the point that "every observation is without significance if it is not compared with other observations." [Pfetch, Barbara & Esser Frank, 'Reorientations in a changing world', in Esser & Pfetch (eds), *Comparing Political Communication: Theories, Cases and Challenges* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p.7.] This observation is particularly pertinent in achieving an objective balance in research to offset the possible subjective elements mentioned here – personal assumptions, values and biases.
[279] Miles, Matthew B. & Huberman, A. Michael, *Qualitative Data Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 1994), p.278.
[280] Deacon, D. Pickering, M. Golding, P. and Murdock, G. (1999) *Researching Communications: A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis* (London: Arnold), p.65.
[281] Savigny & Marsden, p.18.
[282] Jankowski, Nicholas & Wester, Fred, 'The qualitative tradition in social science inquiry: contributions to mass communication research', in Jensen, Klaus & Jankowski, Nicholas (eds*), A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.54.

interview formula in 27 interviews with working journalists conducted in Australia between 2002-2004 as part of an examination into the workings of defamation law. He selected his subjects because of their extensive experience, knowledge and roles as senior editorial staff and journalists and the main focus of the interviews was on the participants' perceptions and experiences of the impact of defamation law on news production.[283] Similarly, in the semi-structured interviews carried out for this dissertation, the interviewees selected were journalists mainly experienced in the coverage of war and government and military press officers with in-depth experience of media handling. Nevertheless in analysing the data collected from interviews there was a need to be constantly aware of the necessity of examining and re-examine the data collected in order that objectivity was retained in the analysis. Interviewees may unconsciously change their perceptions on past events through the passage of time and these perceptions must be cross-checked against written records, archival material where available and material from other interviewees.[284] On this theme, Bentley reflects that identity, orality and memory each evolve essence over time and lay down strata rather like a geological formation in which a world of 'before' and 'after' leaves its trace.[285] It is these "traces", changing opinions, words, reflections and views, expressed orally or in writing and separated by time, which have been analysed in this study, compared and contrasted in the way a geologist would in order to gain accurate data. Again, this cross checking of data from the different streams of research can help to detect missing data, a common problem in political science.[286]

Just as a surveyor takes measurements from a number of vantage points to fix the "true" position of a particular point on the ground, so researchers check the full range of available sources to build up the most accurate and comprehensive account possible. The idea is that the more sources consulted the more likely it is that omissions will show up and that discrepancies in dates, times, places and the

[283] Dent, p.205.
[284] Atkinson et al, p.121.
[285] Bentley, p.157.
[286] Martin, Andrew D., 'Bayesian Analysis', in Box-Steffensmeier et al, p.506.

people involved can be resolved.[287] Triangulation enables analysis which is both more complex and meaningful; this approach is seen as relevant to the area of study where government sources are trying to influence media sources (and vice versa) and both can come up with a diametrically opposed interpretation on the same set of facts – *dissonant data.* This contradictory information may seem to be a barrier to coherent analysis, but both Perlesz and Lindsay stress that instead of fearing or discounting such data, the data can actually provide fertile ground for analysis.[288] Indeed such information can, as will be demonstrated in the analytical section in terms of *embedded journalists* in the Iraq 2003 War[289]. Some journalists saw this as exciting broadcasting, while others viewed it as collusion with the military which produced "action entertainment" at the expense of proper analysis and questioning of military and political motive.[290]

Here *dissonance* reveals fruitful new ground for further analysis and opens up the way to new theoretical insights not only through a triangulation of data, but through methodological triangulation, a research strategy in which different methods are employed for data gathering and analysis around a single object of study.[291] In the case of this study, the single object is the examination of UK government media policy and the multiple methods employed for data gathering – examination of existing oral history records, analysis of biographical, autobiographical, historical and political literature and one-to-one primary source interviews – all of which may help uncover "unexpected dimensions of the area of enquiry".[292]

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[287] Deacon, D. Pickering, M. Golding, P. and Murdock, G. (1999) *Researching Communications: A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis*, (London: Arnold) pp.29-30.
[288] Ibid, p.26.
[289] Embedded journalists = journalists who were stationed with front line units and, with new satellite technology, could broadcast military action as it was happening [Adams, Paul, 'Shock and Awe – An Inevitable Victory', in Beck, Sara and Downing, Malcolm, eds, *The Battle for Iraq: BBC News Correspondents on the War against Saddam and a New World Agenda* (London: BBC Worldwide, 2003), p.111.
[290] Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, *Too Close for Comfort? The Role of embedded reporting during the 2003 Iraq War: Summary report* (Cardiff University, 2004), pp.4-7.
[291] Jankowski & Wester, p.62.
[292] Ibid, p.63.

The analysis of biographical and autobiographical accounts, written and oral accounts from media and government sources involved in the two conflicts being studied, form a substantial part of this study's research. Bentley points out the potential of oral history in terms of memory, language and narrative in fields such as international relations or diplomatic history.[293]

3.6. The conduct of interviews

In terms of primary sources from the media one-to-one interviews were carried out with journalists and military and government staff who took part in both the Iraq Wars, following up various autobiographical sources from the media which provided material which could then be investigated further during the one-to-one fieldwork interview process.

It is worth noting that some of the interviewees had experience in more than one of the fields being examined – history, media, military and government – which made them of possible greater interview potential and data production, which is why they were chosen. For example:

- Lieutenant Commander Steve Tatham, media adviser to British forces in Iraq 2003, but also an author and speaker on Middle East affairs
- Mark Laity – former BBC Defence Correspondent and now Head of Communications at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, in Mons, Belgium.
- Colonel David McDine, a former journalist, a civilian spokesman for the Ministry of Defence and a Territorial Army press officer.

In addition journalists who had covered the Iraq 2003 War were interviewed, drawing on their own reporting of the war through books and articles published by them post-war in order to research what approaches they took to reporting, how

[293] Bentley, Michael, *Modern Historiography* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.157.

they reacted with the military and Ministry of Defence media relations officers and if they felt that they were free to report objectively and without censorship. This invaluable research enabled the framing of questions to be asked in the face-to-face interviews. The four BBC journalists interviewed were Jeremy Bowen, currently the BBC's Middle East Editor, Carolyn Wyatt, BBC Defence Editor, Richard Sambrook, Director of News and Current Affairs during the Iraq 2003 conflict and Ben Brown, an experienced war correspondent who had, with Bowen covered the first Iraq War in 1991. Both Bowen and Brown had faced the censorship imposed in Iraq 1991 in which media were not allowed up in the front line and only taken on escorted trips to units away from front-line action, causing much media resentment.[294] Action footage was provided by military media teams under the direction of Colonel David McDine, a former journalist, Ministry of Defence media relations officer and a member of the Territorial Army Media Operations Group [(MOG(V)] based at the Allied Press and Information Centre (APIC) in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, and away from the Kuwaiti border. The choice of these journalists, all of whom needed military approval to get a Saudi visa to enter the country, was to either stay in the military briefing centre in various hotels where skilled officers made announcements on matters they wanted the people to know and then fielded awkward questions on matters they preferred to keep secret, or pack up and go home.[295] It was this "censorship" and the comparisons with the embedded reporting system in Iraq 2003, when media were allowed up in the front line where the action was, which enabled the framing of questions to be asked, for example:

- Did you see the embedded reporter system as an improvement on the 1991 Iraq war "censorship"?
- Did you believe you had the freedom to report objectively?
- Were you aware of any hidden government agenda to manipulate your reporting?

[294] McDine, Colonel David, Conversations with the author.
[295] Knightley, Philip, *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Iraq* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), p.491.

Similarly the same questions were asked of the military and NATO media relations staff - Colonel Paul Brook (who helped design the media-handling strategy for the Iraq 2003 conflict), Lieutenant-Colonel Angus Taverner, Lieutenant Commander Steve Tatham and Mark Laity, seeking to tease out any hidden government and military agenda in their media handling policy. The result of these interviews is set out in the Iraq 2003 empirical chapter and the Conclusions chapter.

Certainly answers to these concrete questions, such as the temporal sequence of particular actions, are often useful in reconstructing events but follow up questions may allow the interviewee to reflect more abstractly about the underlying causes and motivation behind his actions (or those of others involved in the events being examined).[296] In addition, contemporary newspaper or other media accounts or archives can often provide the facts about what happened on a particular day and provide the material for framing additional interview questions.

In terms of interviews, Mykhalovskiy remarks that it is impossible to undertake fieldwork without entering into the interactions with significant others. Moreover, it is wrong to assume that the input and output of these interactions will be one-way. We should not even think about undertaking qualitative fieldwork without being prepared to become part of the interactions of the setting.[297] This is a point also picked up by Davies in that all researchers are to some degree connected to, and part of, the object of their research and depending on the extent and nature of these connections; questions arise as to whether the results of the research are artefacts of the researcher's presence and inevitable influence on the research process.[298] It again is a matter of being objective and of cross-checking on detail, contention and recollection of events which may have been altered by time, or conscious or unconscious reflection in the mind of an interviewee seeking to establish a place in

[296] Rathbun, p.692.
[297] Mykhalovskiy, E. (1997) 'Reconsidering "table talk": critical thoughts on the relationship between sociology, autobiography and self indulgence', in R. Herz (ed), *Reflexivity and voice*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage) p.159.
[298] Davies, C. A., *Reflexive Ethnography* (London: Routledge, 1999) p.3, and Atkinson et al, p.121.

history. Atkinson et al refer to people justifying the legitimate past by explaining their actions at a later time.[299] Johnson-Cartee and Copeland note that face-to-face conversations allow for high levels of feedback and communication adjustment.[300]

In most cases fieldwork becomes reliant upon one-to-one interactions and relations and these relationships do not just happen. Productive relationships in term of extracting quality material from an interviewee are certainly the outcome of advance negotiation between the researcher and the actors in the field in order to set out the ground rules. Qualitative research is by its very nature interpersonal and intimate. Fieldwork relies upon the establishing and building of relationships with significant others in the field. It is these relationships which give research its intensity, its quality and insight into the everyday social world.[301]

In advance of each interview each interviewee was sent the current draft of the empirical chapter which was to be the subject of the interview. This gave them the opportunity to prepare for the interview, but also it had the advantage of putting them at their ease. The most common method in journalistic interviewing, the semi-structured one, was used, albeit with the firm foundation of the extensive research leading up to the interview. The method involves:

- Research work on the subject of the interview including reading newspaper cuttings on him/her, articles or books written by him/her;
- Material written by others on the subject of the interview, which will often take the opposing view to the interviewee, in order to prompt a response which can open up new and fruitful areas of discussion on the subject, which had not perhaps previously emerged in preliminary research work;

[299] Atkinson et al, p.117.
[300] Johnson-Cartree and Copeland, p.110.
[301] Coffey, p.56.

- Seeking verification through triangulation of contentions which had emerged from previous research work and interviews.[302]

It was agreed that all interviews were "on the record" but each interviewee would have the opportunity to amend their remarks when sent the written text of the interview. Burnham et al refer to a technique particularly used by political scientists, elite interviewing in which researchers need to decide who they are going to see, how they are going to access their interview targets, the best way to conduct an interview and how they should analyse the results.[303] The semi-structured interview, as outlined above, takes these points into account abandons concern with standardisation and control and seeks to promote an active, open-ended dialogue.[304] In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer controls the discussion by referring to an interview guide that sets out the issues to be covered during the exchange - conversations with a purpose - but within that conversation is free to react to what the interviewee is saying and, sometimes, nudge him or her unwittingly on to a line of response which may not, in fact be included in the original agreed terms of reference for the interview.[305] Reflexivity is crucial in this type of interview; a more structured interview style could distort the evidence in that the construction and selection of the questions lead to the failure to ask follow-up questions which can extract additional information.[306] Crucial, too, is the process of building a harmonious relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, creating a basic sense of trust that allows a free flow of information and indeed, from both points of view positive feelings and enjoyment about the process.[307] Rathbun makes the point that archives or memoirs may provide some insight into

[302] "The major way in which we detect distortion and correct for it, is by comparing an informant's account with the accounts given by other informants", Dean, J.F., & Whyte, W.F., 'How Do You Know if the Informant is Telling the Truth?' *Human Organisation* (vol. 17 date), p.111.
[303] Burnham et al, p.231.
[304] Deacon et al, p.65.
[305] Ibid, p.65.
[306] Catterall, Peter, 'Oral History', in Catterall, Peter & Jones, Harriet (eds) *Understanding Documents and Sources* (Oxford, Heinemann, 1994), p.26.
[307] Spradley, James P., *The Ethnographic Interview* (USA: Holt, Rinehart & Winston Inc., 1979), p.78.

the events being examined but interviewing is unique in that it allows the interviewer to ask the questions he or she wants answered.[308]

Wilson notes that face-to-face interviews in a free format are conducted, approximately, like natural conversations between two people. They are often tape-recorded in full for later analysis; although the interviewer may take continuous and contemporaneous notes, this is difficult to do while concentrating on the management of the interview. Note-taking can also be more obtrusive than tape recording, while the use of recording technology is no barrier to qualitative research if supported by traditional data sources (already mentioned in the penultimate paragraph of Section 2).[309] Although 'naturalistic', interviews such as these are managed to a large extent by the interviewer, who sets the agenda of questions, probes more deeply into issues of interest with supplementary questions and records the answers and the discussion.[310] This data collection via an "unstructured" interview, naturalistic in its approach, is not as unstructured as it seems despite the superficial appearances. Semi-structured interviews minimalise procedural activity and allow the freer exploitation of respondents' meanings and beliefs.[311] Personal reactivity comes into this method much more than it does with a highly structured interview, so there is a trade-off and attention must be paid to the objectives of the research and evaluated in this light.

Coffey remarks that it is difficult to conceive of effective fieldwork without paying attention to the relationships and interactions that help to characterise it. She adds that we cannot escape the necessity of developing rapport and a level of intimacy during the pursuit of prolonged fieldwork.[312] To this end, eye contact in an interview

[308] Rathbun, p.691
[309] Miles & Huberman,p.5.
[310] Wilson, M. 'Asking Questions,' in *Data Collection and Analysis*, Sapsford, R. & Jupp, V. (eds), (London: Sage, 1996) pp.94-95..
[311] Ibid, p.119.
[312] Coffey, p.39. Also Spradley, p.79. Spradley refers to the rapport process as proceeding through the following stages – apprehension, exploration, rapport, cooperation and participation. My methodology cuts out the first two since I had already talked to the interviewees, they had already

is important to convey messages of agreement, sympathy, interest and the requisite human emotions to encourage the subject to reveal more relevant data. For this reason in the research for the Iraq Chapter in this dissertation primary source interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed, using the same methodology used by Lucas and Gorst in their primary source interviews for the Suez Oral History Project, primary source material drawn on for the purpose of the Suez Chapter. On a technical point the Iraq chapter interviews were digitally recorded.

There is no methodological need for us to "believe" narrative accounts such as those derived from interviews, any more than we are enjoined to reject them out of hand. Equally, there is no methodological justification to believe in narrative as a form in itself. We are not justified in identifying narratives as providing privileged kinds of insight and what is at stake is the proper analytic stance to be adopted toward them.[313] That analytic stance comes after the interview stage when we can triangulate with other interview material or written primary or secondary sources for validation purposes. Vromen makes the essential point on this type of qualitative research that the researcher must approach it with empathic neutrality since, as most qualitative researchers believe complete objectivity is impossible and the researcher's agenda should be to understand the complex field being researched, while also attempting to be non-judgemental.[314]

Burnham *et al* make the observation that there is not, in the study of politics, a very large literature on elite interviewing and guidance on how it should be carried out and that the key guideline must not be to base any piece of work entirely on elite interviewing, this being consistent with the principle of triangulation which entails

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seen the draft chapter on the conflict about which they are being interviewed and had freely offered their cooperation. In most of the cases I have previously worked with the interviewees and the rapport had already been built up.

[313] Ibid, p.140.

[314] Vromen, Ariadne, 'Debating Methods: Rediscovering Qualitative Approaches', in Marsh & Stoker. P.256

using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena.[315] Hopefully the methodology used in this study may have made some contribution to the use of elite interviewing in future academic research.

3.7. Summary

The case-study methodology used in this study was one designed to cope with the three main fields being examined – media, politics and contemporary history - in order to produce a qualitative data-gathering system which was flexible, objective, qualitative and evidence-led. Case studies were created and composed of data gathered through archival research, examination of autobiographical, biographical and academic material, one-to-one interviews, all subject to final analysis.

Triangulation was employed as a key method of data collection and analysis. Interviews (elite interviews) were conducted with named media, military and government personnel on a one-to-one basis and were semi-structured in format, again to encourage more reflexivity and interaction. Preparatory research – government archives, autobiographical, biographical, works of academic analysis, private papers - gave material for each interview as well as providing comparative data in their own right. Earlier interviews provided additional material for those later in sequence and for further research work taking in newly-published material for which there had been already set up a key-word search pro forma in over 80 academic electronic databases, covering publications in relevant fields including, history, media communications, political science, sociology, Middle East affairs and defence studies. This search pattern dropped the references into an email box on a daily basis to allow the monitoring and investigation of new publications.

The challenge of this methodology as defined was to compare two different historical periods but to contribute an original focus on existing research and to complement that research. The challenges were to:

[315] Burnham et al, p.232.

- Compare the media profile in 1956, with mainly one BBC TV channel, with that of the more instant media multi-channel TV approach of 2003
- Compare the printed media of 1956, with that of 2003 when the Murdoch empire crossed the boundaries of written and electronic media
- Compare the approaches of the Eden and Blair governments on how they attempted to agenda build and to win media support for government policy and to retain that support
- Build on existing academic research and make an original contribution to enhance existing academic analytical literature.

Governments constantly seek to influence media, and through them their readership/listenership/viewership in order to win support for government policy and the government agenda. McCombs make the observation that the influence of the mass media on their public (the same public the government is trying to influence) comes from the news stories and the advertising content of the mass media.[316]

The study here seeks to show the differences between Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003 and to give a new insight into how Iraq 2003 was more successful in winning media, and public, support, for the government agenda. It seeks to determine that the Blair government may have learned from past government agenda building such as Suez 1956, in order to build up support for its agenda during a period leading up to regime change and the regime change itself with the key point being that the media in the main bought into the UK government agenda at the time without realising that they were being manipulated.

It is hoped to demonstrate the proof of this, or at least leave an audit trail for future historians and political scientists, which will confirm this dissertation's firm contention that this manipulation by the Blair government was planned and simply did not happen by accident. When more evidence is available, particularly from

[316] McCoombs, p.77.

declassified government documentation to be deposited at the National Archive in future years, scholars may be able to add further evidence to this dissertation's contention.

4. The Suez Crisis 1956

4.1. Background to the invasion of the Suez Canal Zone

This chapter is the first of two case studies in which the research question, stated here is examined:

How did the UK government plan its agenda-building strategy in order to attempt to win the support of the media in two conflicts – Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003?

The case studies involved are the conflicts of Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003 and in examining each this study will make a comparative analysis of the UK government's media agenda building strategy and policy in order to come to conclusions through examination of primary and secondary source material.

Turning to the first case study, Suez 1956, it is hard to realise in 2009 how much of a threat figure the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser appeared to many Western, and especially British eyes. The Suez Canal, opened in 1869, became a key route to and from British India and, taking advantage of Egypt's near bankruptcy in its drive for modernisation, British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli bailed the country out by buying Egypt's shares in the Canal in November 1885, taking over the controlling interest.[317] William Gladstone, then out of office, described Disraeli's action as "a showy and dangerous example of forward diplomacy, carrying in its train over-extended future entanglement".[318] This soon proved true bringing rising nationalism in Egypt, resentment of Britain's growing intervention in Egyptian affairs and the increasing internal financial problems (shortages and arrears of pay in the public services and heavy taxation).[319] These

[317] Khedive Ismail, the ruler of Egypt, was in deep financial trouble and sold his 44 per cent holding for £4m, borrowed by Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli from the bankers Rothschild to avoid going to Parliament where he would have encountered opposition. [Turner, Barry, *Suez 1956: The Inside Story of the First Oil War* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2006), p.24.]
[318] Jenkins, Roy *Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p.502.
[319] P Woodward, *Nasser* (Harlow, Essex 1992).

factors led Egypt's Minister of War Arabi Pasha to organise a nationalist revolt in 1882, seizing Alexandria and endangering free passage of the Suez Canal.[320] The revolt was put down by a British force under General Sir Garnet Wolseley.

Under the Convention of Constantinople of 1888, it was agreed that the Canal "shall always be free and open, in time of war as in time of peace to every vessel of commerce or war, without distinction of flag."[321] With the proclamation of a British protectorate in December 1914, the United Kingdom assumed all powers conferred on Turkey by the Convention and in 1936 the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Alliance authorised the British Government to station forces on Egyptian territory. The British military base which spread over the Canal Zone was the largest in the world at the time, comprising 11 air bases and 16 army camps. However, in October 1951 the Egyptian Parliament rejected the Treaty of 1936 which allowed those bases and in October 1954 the UK signed an agreement with Egypt to withdraw all British troops from Egypt within 18 months.[322] Come the Suez Crisis and Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal in July 1956, it was hard for the British Government to change a policy which had gone back almost 80 years. After exercising power for so long at all levels of Egyptian life the British community there could see no reasons to change its ways.[323] Neither could the British Prime Minister Sir Anthony Eden who believed that Egyptians lacked the skill to run the Canal properly.[324]

In a debate in the House of Commons on 27 July 1956, Prime Minister Eden said: "The unilateral decision of the Egyptian Government to expropriate the Suez Canal Company, without notice and in breach of the Concession Agreements, affects the rights and interests of many nations. Her Majesty's Government are consulting other Governments immediately concerned, with regard to the serious situation

[320] J Pollock, *Kitchener: The Road to Omdurman* (London, 1998), p.49.
[321] Mathews, R.O., 'The Suez Canal Dispute: A Case Study in Peaceful Settlement', *International Organisation* (Vol. 100, Issue 1, Spring 1987), p.81.
[322] Cohen, Michael J., 'Prologue to Suez: Anglo-American Planning for Military Intervention in a Middle East War, 1955-1956', *The Journal of Strategic Studies* (Vol. 9, no. 4, 2003), p155.
[323] Turner, Barry, *Suez 1956: The Inside Story of the First Oil War* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2006), p.60.
[324] Aburish, Said K., *Nasser: The Last Arab* (London: Duckworth, 2005), p.110.

thus created. The consultations will cover both the effect of this arbitrary action upon the operation of the Suez Canal and also the wider questions which it raises."[325]

The events surrounding the Suez Crisis of 1956 could be perceived as marking the death of the old imperialist order as represented by the colonial powers of Britain and France. Both were still economically weakened by two world wars; both had suffered shrinking colonial empires and both had been eclipsed in terms of world power and influence by the United States of America which used a more "informal dominion", often more effective than direct administration to pursue its own world aims.[326]

More than 56 years later the Suez fiasco of 1956 still leaves a deep scar on the British political psyche, and has been described as "the greatest professional trauma faced by the British Civil Service before or since 1957".[327] Indeed, as Ashton also remarks, the Suez events seem to have left a far deeper mark on ourselves than on the Arabs.[328] The Egyptian leader, Colonel Nasser, who had led a coup in 1952 to overthrow the Egyptian monarchy, aspired to a free and independent republican Egypt with full control of the Suez Canal which was, at the time of his coup, still in the hands and military control of the United Kingdom. His book *The Philosophy of the Revolution* also spread his Arab nationalism philosophy to the rest of the Middle East and to Muslims beyond "enabling them and their brothers in faith to wield power wisely and without limit".[329]

Britain, with a 40 per cent share in the Suez Canal and with her vital oil supplies

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[325] Hansard, *House of Commons Debate 27 July 1956 vol 557 cc777-80, p.777*
[326] Landes, D. S., 'Some Thoughts on the Nature of Economic Imperialism', *Journal of Economic History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p.496.
[327] Kelly, Saul & Gorst, Anthony (eds), *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis* (Abingdon, Oxon: Frank Cass Publishers, 2005), p.3.
[328] Ashton, Nigel John, 'A Microcosm of Decline: British Loss of Nerve and Military Intervention in Jordan and Kuwait, 1958 and 1961', *The Historical Journal* (Cambridge: Vol. 40, no. 4, 1977), p.1069.
[329] Nasser, G. A., *The Philosophy of the Revolution* (Washington D.C:, 1955), pp.113-114.

travelling though that narrow maritime jugular, was the Canal's largest user, owning one-third of the ships that passed through it in 1955 and regarding freedom of passage through the Canal as her right.[330] The intervention which led to the October 1956 Franco-British-Israeli invasion of the Canal Zone, and the strategy which underpinned it, lay in the perception of Colonel Nasser as Britain's principal enemy in that vital region. Nasser was well aware of the effects on the West of cutting off oil, when, in his book he noted that whereas the average output of an American oil well per day was 11 barrels, the average in the Arab regions was 4,000 barrels, a potent economic weapon.[331] Nasser consistently used the phrase "Arab oil for the Arabs" in his speeches meaning that the oil (which Egypt did not have) had to be shared amongst the "brother and sister Arab nations".[332]

The double economic and political threat of a possible adversary controlling the Suez Canal and the transport of essential oil from the Middle East oilfields, plus Nasser having his own international agenda in Middle East spheres of influence regarded as previously British and French, could not be ignored by the old colonial imperialist powers. Nor could they be ignored by Israel since Nasser's opposition to the new Israeli state was clearly on record. He had described Israel's creation as a "result of imperialism", maintaining that if Palestine had not been under the British mandate Zionism would never have been able to muster enough support to realise a national home there.[333]

France, in common with the United Kingdom, was still economically weakened by the effects of the Second World War. At the same time she was facing severe internal pressure in her empire from the independence movement in Algeria and saw danger to her own interests in a powerful Arab nationalist movement based in Egypt. This was a threat to France's own directly controlled colonies and the

[330] Horne, Alistair, *Macmillan 1894-1956* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p.403.
[331] Ibid, p.108.
[332] Aburish, p.143. The phrase 'Arab oil for the Arabs' was a source of annoyance to Saudi Arabia and the other oil-rich countries of the Middle East.
[333] Ibid, p.98.

political domination over them which France exercised.[334] Nasser's pan-Arab policy led him into supporting the Algerian independence movement with arms and training to such an effect that in 1954 the French offered to stop arms deals to Israel in exchange for Nasser's withdrawal of aid to the Algerian rebels.[335] Again oil was a potent reason for France hanging on to Algeria with the exploration and expectation of future oil discoveries in the Sahara.[336] In both Britain and France's case prestige was also important and perceived loss of prestige was an important ingredient in the French and British reaction to the nationalization of the Suez Canal.

However, this "loss of prestige" was not balanced by good intelligence in order to come to a well-founded decision on political and/or military action. This intelligence would reach Eden through the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), based at the Cabinet Office and the filter through which information from the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), other UK military intelligence sources, and radio surveillance from the Government Communication Headquarters (GCHQ) at Cheltenham and its outstation in Cyprus and Foreign Office-gathered information from embassies throughout the Middle East. Former JIC chairman Sir Percy Cradock notes that by 1956 Eden had come to see Nasser as irredeemable. Cradock adds: "He (Eden) regarded himself as an authority on the area and he was already falling into the dangerous practice of selecting the pieces of intelligence that fitted his preconceptions and neglecting the Committee's more balanced overall view."[337]

Cradock confirms that the intelligence machine was being used selectively by Eden in disregard of the policy approved by the Cabinet, namely no confrontation with Nasser but a long-term isolation.[338] Dorrill also confirms this misuse and

[334] Landes, D. S., *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* (USA: Norton, 1998), p.379.
[335] Aburish, p.76.
[336] Turner, p.190. The first oil strike in the Sahara came in June 1956.
[337] Cradock, Percy, *Know your Enemy: How the Joint Intelligence Committee Saw the World* (London: John Murray, 2002), p.166.
[338] Cradock, p.117.

claims that Eden only wanted to hear information which suited his own conclusions.[339] A further complication lay in the fact that there was no assurance that a member agency would provide the JIC with relevant information and that the Foreign Office knew of all the actions of M16 since MI6, believing that the Foreign Office was "soft" on Nasser, was pursuing its own agenda. That agenda included feeding in to Eden information from an agent said to be in Nasser's inner circle that Nasser was supported by the Soviet Union and wished to spread his power base throughout the Middle East.[340]

On 29th October, 1956, Israeli forces invaded Egyptian territory in the Sinai Desert and advanced toward the Suez Canal. The British and French governments issued an ultimatum that both sets of forces should withdraw to a line 10 miles from the Canal, an ultimatum rejected by Egypt which had nationalized the Canal on July 26th that year and regarded it as being part of sovereign Egyptian territory. British planes bombed Egyptian airfields on Oct 31st as part of hostilities which had been building up since the Egyptian nationalization. The British/French/Israeli action gave the Soviet government the distraction it needed to crush a revolt in Hungary while the world's eyes were elsewhere. The day before, on October 30th, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev and senior colleagues in the Soviet Politburo had decided to set aside military action over Hungary for fear of international outrage. The next day, with the world's attention firmly focussed on the invasion of Egypt, the Politburo decision was reversed and Khrushchev ordered the Soviet Army back into Hungary to crush the rebellion. By November 5th the uprising was over and the Soviet leader was able to turn his attention to threaten to use force to aid Egypt as well as to continue to put diplomatic pressure on Britain, France and Israel through the UN, forming an unlikely alliance with the USA. [341]

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[339] Dorrill, Stephen, *MI6: Fifty Years of Special Operations* (London: Fourth Estate, 2000), pp.602-3.
[340] Lucas, W. Scott, 'The Missing Link? Patrick Dean, Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee,' in Kelly, Saul and Gorst, Anthony (eds), *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis* , p.119.
[341] Fursenko, Aleksandr & Naftali, Timothy, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The inside story of an American adversary* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), pp.130-135.

4.2. Eden and the media in the lead up to military action over Suez

According to Eden in his own memoirs, in the lead-up to the actual military action "public opinion in our own country held steadier than appeared from press reports.[342] Eden's biographer Thorpe wrote that *The Times,* declared that Nasser's seizure of the Canal was "a breach of undertakings which Egypt has freely given and renewed in recent years, (27th July, 1956, edition). Thorpe also wrote that newspapers not normally supportive of the Conservatives agreed. "No more Hitlers", declared the *Daily Herald. "*There is no room for appeasement". The *News Chronicle* assured it readers that 'The British Government will be fully justified in taking retaliatory action.' (Both 28th July, 1956, editions).[343]

In the House of Commons Conservative M.P. Julian Amery said: "Is my Right Hon. Friend aware that he will have the overwhelming support of public opinion in this country on whatever steps he decides to take, however grave, to repair this injury to our honour and interests?"[344] Leader of the Opposition Hugh Gaitskell added his support: "On this side of the House, we deeply deplore this highhanded and totally unjustifiable step by the Egyptian Government. Has the Prime Minister in mind to refer this matter to the Security Council? Has he yet come to any decision on that point? In view of the seizure of the property of the Suez Canal Company and the vague statement about future compensation, will he bear in mind the desirability of blocking the sterling balances of the Egyptian Government?"[345]

Eden certainly welcomed this support in the House, but as for newspaper support in the long term he looked to the *Daily Telegraph* as an indicator of support for his policies. According to Frederick Bishop, his Principal Private Secretary during the Suez Crisis, Eden "paid far too much attention" to that newspaper "since it is

[342] Eden, Sir Anthony, *The Memoirs of Sir Anthony Eden: Full Circle* (London, 1960), p.455.
[343] Thorpe, D.R., *Eden: The Life and Times of Anthony Eden* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2003), p.490.
[344] Hansard, *27 July 1956 vol 557 cc777-80, p.779*
[345] Ibid, pp.777-778.

supposed to reflect the opinions of the bulk of the Conservative Party and there were, therefore, further implications behind it."[346] Bishop, recorded his comments for the Suez Oral History Project along with other political and military personages involved in government decision making in the Suez Crisis. These interviews, both through the original tapes and the transcripts, are vital primary source material drawn on in the preparation of this dissertation.

By "further implications" Bishop may have meant that Eden looked to the *Daily Telegraph* as a political barometer indicating the level of internal support, at the same time failing to fully analyse other national and international publications to properly gauge external endorsement or opposition. Both *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* would have enabled Eden to target *activated* public opinion in seeking support for his political agenda, in other words those most likely to win him that support – party loyalists, local community activists, interest group spokesperson opinion leaders and others who pay close attention to the political realm. As Entman and Herbst stress it is this *activated* public opinion that matters most in day-to-day policy making.[347] In effect, Eden's task should have been less difficult to win these supportive elements in the community since the British national newspaper system provides more support for right-of-centre politicians than it does for these in the centre and left with, at the time of Suez, the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mirror* were among the few national newspapers on the left while the *Daily Telegraph, The Times, Daily Mail and Daily Express* were on the right.[348]

In handling the media, the key government figure should have been William Clark Eden's Press Secretary. In 1955, when he succeeded Sir Winston Churchill as Prime Minister, Eden had sounded out Clark, then diplomatic correspondent of the *Observer,* who also had experience of the Commonwealth and had won a place in broadcasting history as the first man to interview a Cabinet Minister on television.

[346] Scot Lucas, W., & Gorst, Anthony, *Papers of the Suez Oral History Project* (London: Kings College, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives,), SUEZOHP3, p.4.
[347] Entman & Herbst, p.207.
[348] Donsbach, Wolfgang & Patterson, Thomas, 'Partnership, Professionalism and Political Roles in Five Countries', in Esser & Pfetsch, p.256.

Clark was invited to dine at Chequers and he wrote in his diary afterwards "all seemed well".[349]

A year later Clark's diary entry shows disillusion creeping in. On April 6th, 1956, he notes: "Eden's greatest lack is serenity and the air of being a rather safe father figure. The insecurity of Eden is the cause of his insecurity. He still does not feel sure of himself. He is hurt and upset outwardly by personal attacks. Several times when papers have attacked him he has sent for the editor or proprietor, over my strong protests. The result has been to let him know he was moved by their words".[350] Clark further asserts that there was no "big design" in terms of being ahead of events and, by implication, no real public relations strategy with a narrow fire-fighting role obscuring the big picture. He feared that the result of the mishandling of the Egyptian situation would "result in some terrible humiliation when the war begins".[351] Clark was not the only one who thought Eden failed to see the "big picture" and to think strategically rather tactically. Foreign Office Under Secretary for Middle East Affairs in 1956, Sir Evelyn Shuckburgh, remarked in his diary that Eden "cannot bear long-term thoughts and wants only to discuss this morning's telegrams.[352] Historian Anthony Adamthwaite also underlines Eden's distrust of planning by pointing out that unlike the more strategic Foreign Secretary in the previous Attlee Labour administration, Ernest Bevin, Eden was a "tactician, not a strategist". The evidence for this, says Adamthwaite, lies in Eden's neglect of the Permanent Under Secretary's Committee, a think tank for the coordination of foreign and defence policies.[353] Eden allowed this group to wither away as a vital policy advisory group, neglecting forward planning and strategy in policy as he did in public relations.[354] The group was chaired by the Cabinet Office Permanent

[349] Thorpe, p.443. The use of "hostess" and not "host" may be linked to Clark's homosexuality.
[350] Clark, William, *William Clark Manuscripts* (Oxford: Bodleian Library) Box 160, Downing Street Diary, April 6, 1956.
[351] Ibid.
[352] Shuckburgh, Evelyn, *Descent into Suez: Diaries 1951-56* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986), p.346.
[353] Adamthwaite, Anthony, 'Suez Revisited', *International Affairs* (Vol. 64, No. 3, Summer 1988), p.452.
[354] Ibid.

Secretary Sir Norman Brook who later confided to a senior Foreign Office colleague Evelyn Shuckburgh in November 1956 that the whole Suez affair had been a folly, a folly perhaps exacerbated by Eden's neglect of this senior Civil Service policy group.[355]

The doubt on the part of Clark, and others, on Eden's political inability to see that big picture could lie with the question of the role played, and the influence exerted (or not exerted), by Eden's advisers in the formulation and execution of policy.[356] Clark also related a meeting he had on 13th August, 1956, with Richard Powell, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence (MoD). A "very depressed" Powell, the most senior MoD civil servant, said the present military plans would end up in a massive invasion of Egypt "which would turn world opinion against us".[357] Clark's frustrations would eventually lead to his resignation. Even Eden's own First Sea Lord, Earl Mountbatten of Burma, the professional head of the Royal Navy, expressed his severe doubts at a meeting of the Chiefs of Staffs Committee on 21st August 1956 and said he "felt very real danger that *Operation Musketeer* (the military plan for the invasion of the Suez Canal) would cause serious and continuing disorders in the Middle East."[358] He was in disagreement with Field Marshall Sir Gerald Templar who as Chief of the General Staff (CGS) represented the Army on that committee. Mountbatten, as a member of the Royal Family, tended to treat other service chiefs as his underlings, and was distrusted as devious by Templar who said to him: "If you swallowed a nail you would shit a corkscrew".[359] However, Mountbatten as former Viceroy of India had accumulated vast experience of handling nationalist sensitivities and recognising nationalist ideology. He was convinced that military action against Egypt would not resolve the problems it set

[355] Shuckburgh, p366.
[356] Kelly, Saul & Gorst, Anthony (eds), *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis* (Oxford, Frank Cass, 2000), p.1.
[357] Clark, William, *From Three Worlds* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1986), p.173.
[358] Mountbatten Papers, University of Southampton, MB1/N106, and NA COS(56) 82nd meeting Tuesday 21st August 1956.
[359] Turner, pp.205-206.

out to do, but would make them worse.[360] Templar saw Nasser as a communist threat and went as far as to call Mountbatten "yellow" at a chiefs of staff meeting.[361]

In terms of the "big picture" and the rest of the world's perception of British actions over Suez world's perception, the warning signs were already being flagged up within Eden's own government. In the personal papers of Sir Walter Monckton, Eden's Minister of Defence, is a letter dated 5th September, 1956, from his colleague Harold Watkinson, the Minister for Transport and Civil Aviation, in which he writes to Monckton: "I am in no doubt that we could knock Nasser down quickly, but that leaves unanswered the much larger question of how do we then hold our position and keep the Canal open if world opinion turns against us?"[362] Barely three weeks later Monckton, in a letter to Eden, promised he would not leave the Cabinet during the crisis. He said "the burden of the MoD is too much", adding "I cannot go on coping with this extremely tricky and arduous department."[363] Eden reshuffled him to Paymaster General on October 19 and therefore prevented a possible defection.

In the age before spin doctors Eden was not very *political* in the sense of knowing how to lead and manipulate public opinion compared with Tony Blair and the government agenda-building system run by his Director of Communications Alastair Campbell. Yet Eden was very concerned that government policy should be presented positively, and relied on Clark to arrange matters for him. When their agendas diverged, Clark proved counter-productive but Eden foresaw this and tried to proselytise on his own behalf. He came from that class and generation which believed *The Times* to be the principal newspaper of record.[364] This apart, and although Labour Prime Minister Clement Atlee never paid much attention during his own premiership (1945-1951) to a mainly hostile press, colleagues in Attlee's Labour government such as Herbert Morrison (Home Secretary) and Sir Hartley

[360] Turner, p.205.
[361] Mountbatten Papers, File on the Suez affair, p.3.
[362] Monckton Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Box 7, Nos. 168-170.
[363] Monckton Papers, Box 7, Nos. 210-211.
[364] Thorpe, p.444.

Shawcross (Attorney General) clearly resented the imbalance on the national newspapers who in the main supported the Conservative Party.[365] Shawcross in 1946 attacked "the campaign of calumny and misrepresentation which the Tory Party and Tory stooge press" had directed at the Labour administration.[366] The same year, after Parliament set up a Royal Commission on the Press, the Press Council was forced on the industry as a measure of regulation, one of the verdicts of the Commission in its report being that members "were distressed by their partisanship" and also, with a few exceptions, "failing to provide the electorate with adequate materials for sound political judgement".[367]

Eden, unlike Atlee and other Labour politicians, could be assured of support from most of the right-wing controlled media. To Eden, *The Times* was a respectable version of *Pravda* and was often regarded abroad as such.[368] Eden then turned from trusting his own press secretary and made direct approaches to editors, such as Arthur Christiansen of the *Daily Express* and Iverach McDonald, foreign editor of the *Times.* Indeed, McDonald, in the absence of the *Times* Editor Sir William Haley, wrote several sympathetic and supportive editorials on Eden's Suez policy.[369] Eden's direct approach to the people at the top, press barons and editors, was calculated to feed them exclusive briefing material and to make them "insiders". In the case of the mainly supportive right-wing press, owned then by press barons or

[365] Greenslade, Roy, *Press Gang: How newspapers make profit from propaganda* (London: Macmillan, 2003), p.133). Greenslade points out that up to the actual invasion of Egypt in October 1956, *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph,* along with the *Daily Mail, Daily Sketch and Daily Express* all supported Eden. Daily newspapers against military action were the *Guardian, Daily Mirror, News Chronicle* and the *Daily Herald.* In his memoirs its editor during the Suez crisis, Colin Coote (edited 1951-1964), denied that his paper was the "mouthpiece" of the Conservative Party and had never hesitated to attack in although the newspaper had a conservative philosophy.. However, Greenslade notes that during Coote's reign as editor examples of any attacks on the Conservative party were "hard to find" (Greenslade, p.48).
[366] Beckett, p.208.
[367] Beckett, p.208, and Greenslade, Roy, *Press Gang: How Newspapers make Profits from Propaganda* (London: Macmillan, 2004), pp.46-49.
[368] Thorpe,p.444.
[369] Thorpe, p.497.

newspaper families, they were more prone than profit-seeking conglomerates to indulge in the sort of ideological crusade in which Eden was indulging.[370]

Turning to broadcasting and the BBC, Eden's relationship was an uncomfortable one, despite the fact that the chairman of governors of the BBC was his former colleague and senior civil servant Sir Alexander Cadogan.[371] Severe differences arose between Eden and what he called "these Communists at the BBC" over the demand of the Leader of the Opposition, Hugh Gaitskell, on the right to reply to Prime Ministerial broadcasts given at key points during the Suez Crisis.[372] Eden was shocked to learn that he could not simply address the nation at will about the Suez crisis but had to be invited to make a ministerial broadcast. That broadcast was likely to involve the offer of a "right to reply to the Leader of the Opposition, much to Eden's chagrin.[373] Eden had, when he first became Prime Minister succeeding Sir Winston Churchill in 1955, felt comfortable with television. Suave and good looking he was a quarter of a century younger than Churchill and attached, as he said, "first importance" to TV as a medium and by then a third of the population in the UK had television sets.[374] However, according to the BBC's current Political Editor Nick Robinson the "first importance" was to propaganda broadcasts since in his previous role as Foreign Secretary he had demanded the right to make a ministerial broadcast with no reply from the Opposition and was furious when the BBC had instead offered him the chance to be questioned on the new *Press Conference* programme.[375]

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[370] Page, Benjamin I., 'The Mass Media as Political Actors', *Political Science and Politics* (Vol. 29, No. 1, March 1996), p.21.
[371] Thorpe, p.497.
[372] Cockerell, Michael, *Live from No 10: the Inside Story of Prime Ministers and Television* (London: Faber & Faber, 1988), p.45.
[373] Seymour-Ure, Colin, *Prime Ministers and the Media: issues of Power and Control* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), pp.38-39.
[374] Robinson, Nick, *Live from Downing Street: The Inside story of Politics, Power and the Media* (London: Bantam Press, 2012), pp. 112-113.
[375] Ibid, p.113.

Although Clarke was more aware than was Eden of their political incompatibility, he had accepted the post of Press and Public Relations adviser. He loved the world of the powerful and influential, and saw his appointment as an *entrée.*[376] Yet others take a different view of Clark and Turner in his history of the Suez affair says that Clark's job was to show that while any government is entitled to put the most favourable slant on its management of events, there had to be some give and take in dealings with the press.[377] This view, says Turner, was incomprehensible to Eden and others in government such as the Commonwealth Secretary (and later Prime Minister) Sir Alec Douglas-Home.[378] But it was not long before Eden became disenchanted. He consulted Clark about how best to present his reshuffles (Eden was worrying about where to place his Conservative party rival and Deputy Prime Minister R. A. Butler after the autumn Budget) and Clark interpreted this as *carte blanche* to offer his opinions freely on all manner of subjects. He was particularly free on giving policy advice on America and the Commonwealth, both of which he knew well from his journalist days. Eden thought this was not Clark's function; in essence, claims Thorpe, he regarded him as a dubious, albeit necessary, part of the public relations industry.[379] Eden has airbrushed Clark out of his life in his own memoirs although one of his other biographers Robert Rhodes James refers to Clark as "a journalist of great charm and good humour, of unswerving honesty and with a strong internationalist outlook".[380] Both the latter qualities were to put him at odds with Eden as the Suez Crisis grew.

4.3. Eden's approach to influencing the media: tactical rather than strategic

When Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal on 26th July, 1956 the UK media reacted against the move, right across the newspaper spectrum, with one exception. Eden's biographer Thorpe, to whom all his personal papers had been

[376] Thorpe, p.444.
[377] Turner, p.159.
[378] Ibid.
[379] Thorpe, pp.443-444.
[380] Rhodes James, p.406.

made available by his widow Lady Eden, wrote:

"The Press, which had been obsessed with the Wimbledon tennis championships all week, now turned its attentions to Nasser. The headlines were largely unequivocal, the one exception to the otherwise universal condemnation in Egypt coming from the Manchester Guardian. The Labour-supporting Daily Mirror even dubbed the Egyptian leader 'Grabber Nasser'.[381] *The Daily Mail and the Daily Telegraph made immediate comparisons of Nasser with Hitler and both these papers, along with the third Conservative supporting newspaper, the Daily Express, called for action, lacing their coverage with criticism of Eden for trusting Nasser in the first place."*[382]

Public opinion, according to Thorpe, was perceived by Eden as initially firmly in support of action against Nasser and the press reflected these feelings including newspapers not normally supportive of the Conservatives. "No more Adolf Hitlers", declared the *Daily Herald* adding, "There is no room for appeasement". The *News Chronicle* assured its readers that: "The British Government will be fully justified in taking retaliatory action".[383] The press, in an overwhelming majority in July, was in favour of a strong government response to Nasser, with only a small majority advising caution.[384] However, as the crisis progressed and military action came into the frame, four newspapers opposed that action – the *Daily Mirror, Daily Herald, News Chronicle* and the *Manchester Guardian,* although the last named was the only one to consistently oppose military action from the start.[385] In the first half of the 1950s there were fewer than five million television viewers and British newspapers were more heavily read than in the Iraq 1991 and 2003 conflicts with

[381] Thorpe, p.481
[382] Shaw, pp.23-24.
[383] Shaw, p.23.
[384] Parmentier, Guillaume, 'The British Press in the Suez Crisis', *The Historical Journal* (Vol. 23, No. 2, June 1980), p.436. Parmentier makes the point that newspapers supporting the opposition were eager to portray the Conservative government as weak and ineffective, and therefore recommended strong action for different reasons.
[385] Tulloch, John, 'The *Daily Mirror* and the invasions of Egypt (1956) and Iraq (2003)', *Journalism Studies (vol.8, No. 1, 2007), p.46.* Also Greenslade, p.133.

the *Times* being particularly aggressive in supporting an invasion of Egypt to reclaim the Suez Canal.[386]

On July 27th Eden formed an *ad hoc* Cabinet committee, to be known as the Egypt Committee, to handle all aspects of the seizure and the UK's plans to react to it. This was chaired by Eden and included as its regular members Lord Salisbury (Lord President of the Council), Harold Macmillan (Chancellor of the Exchequer), Selwyn Lloyd (Foreign Secretary), Sir Alec Douglas-Home (Commonwealth Secretary) and Walter Monckton (Minister of Defence).[387] However, in terms of relationships with the media and building a government agenda to win favourable media support, Eden was in a quandary since by this time he had lost faith in his own press adviser William Clark.[388] He was reminded of the powerful media criticism which had eventually bought down Neville Chamberlain early in the Second World War and led to Churchill becoming Prime Minister.[389] Determined not to go the way of Chamberlain, from whose own government Eden himself had resigned in 1938 in opposition to Chamberlain's appeasement policies over Hitler and Mussolini, he himself gave confidential briefings to influential editors such as Sir William Haley (*Times*), his foreign editor Iverach McDonald and Arthur Christiansen (*Daily Express*). He met the latter on the afternoon of 27th July and on the same day Christiansen wrote to his proprietor Lord Beaverbrook, then in the south of France, "I came away impressed with his (Eden's) firmness of purpose".[390]

Although all three of the Conservative Party-supporting papers, *Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail and Daily Express* pressed for action against Nasser, they laced their

[386] Moorcraft, Paul L. & Taylor, Philip M., *Shooting the Messenger: The Political Impact of War Reporting* (Washington D.C: Potomac Books, 2008), pp.74-75.
[387] Rhodes James, Robert, *Anthony Eden* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), p.462 and Thorpe, p. 481.
[388] Seymour-Ure, p.125. Lobby correspondents also became aware that there was a rift between Eden and Clark and., as a consequence, the lobby lost confidence in Clark as a channel to gauge the Prime Minister's views.
[389] Thorpe, p.497.
[390] Ibid.

calls for action with criticism of Eden for making the agreement with Nasser to abandon the Suez military bases two years before.[391] Eden had to convince their proprietors, all autocratic press barons with a shared interest in maintaining the world status of Britain and her empire that he would act decisively. With the *Daily Express* he did that through the editor Arthur Christiansen by giving him a personal briefing stressing that he would act to regain control of Suez but that the government needed time to prepare its plans and he needed that confidence respected. Christiansen relayed this to his proprietor Lord Beaverbrook whose support was won.[392] Shaw's research reveals that Eden also met the editor of the *Daily Mail*, Arthur Wareham, on July 31st, 1956. No record of that conversation was kept but Shaw notes that "Whatever it was it certainly paid off for the *Mail* overnight shifted its ground significantly".[393] The *Mail,* together with its sister paper the *Evening Standard,* had been one of Eden's most persistent critics up to the end of July, Shaw adds, but the confidential talk with Eden may have persuaded them that negotiation with Nasser was not appeasement and Eden may have convinced the *Mail* of his firmness of purpose.[394] This firmness of purpose could have had the firm foundation of Cabinet agreement since on 27th July, 1956, the Cabinet had met and Eden had posed the question to his colleagues "whether they were prepared in the last resort to pursue their objective by the threat or even the use of force".[395] Thorpe notes in his biography of Eden that at this meeting that ministers wished the military chiefs of staff to push on with a military operation for the seizure of the canal and the overthrow of Nasser.[396]

In terms of the *Daily Telegraph*, winning that traditional Tory paper over was more difficult in view of its hostility to Eden, noted by William Clark as being due to the wife of the proprietor, Lady Pamela Berry's resentment of being avoided by

[391] Shaw, p.24, Julian Amery interview, SUEZOHP: 1, 1989 June 12, p.12.
[392] Shaw, pp.30-34.
[393] Shaw, p.34.
[394] Shaw, p.34.
[395] Dooley, Howard J., 'Great Britain's 'Last Battle' in the Middle East: Notes on Cabinet Planning during the Suez Crisis of 1956', *The International History Review* (Vol. xi, No. 3, August 1989), p.6.
[396] Thorpe, p.493.

the Edens at social functions.[397] Sir Frederick Bishop, Eden's PPS at the time of Suez, later noted the *Daily Telegraph's* opposition to Eden since the newspaper, although pro-Tory, had been anti Eden over his giving up of the Suez bases and had even called for his resignation in a campaign of January 1956. Come Nasser's action in nationalising the Suez Canal Eden realised he had to win as much media support to retake the Canal and, at a meeting with the chiefs of staff on 31 July 1956 he said: "Every effort should be made to encourage Nasser to put himself further in the wrong." At the same time public opinion in this country and the world should be prepared to support any action we might eventually take.[398] Bishop later remarked that anybody who knew really knew Eden said he paid far too much attention to what the *Daily* Telegraph wrote.[399] Eden, therefore, was conscious of the *Telegraph's* position in reflecting the opinions of the bulk of the Conservative Party.[400] He tackled this problem by sending two of the senior members of the Egypt committee, R.A. Butler and Lord Salisbury to see the newspaper's proprietor Lord Berry on 27th July, 1956. They gave Berry "secret and unattributable information" about the government's determination to take a tough stand which had the effect of assuring Berry that Eden would pursue an imperialist line the newspaper was calling for. As a result the *Telegraph* dropped criticism of Eden's "appeasement" and lent its support to him.[401]

In terms of television Eden made his first Suez Crisis broadcast to the nation on Aug 8th 1956 but again fell out with his press secretary William Clark who had not checked the arrangements. Eden found himself in "cramped, crowded conditions" provided by the BBC.[402] Conscious of his image, the Prime Minister would have preferred to have broadcast from more congenial and statesmanlike surroundings at 10 Downing Street.[403] It is interesting to compare this with Nasser's approach to agenda building; he made his Suez Canal nationalisation

[397] William Clark Manuscripts, 7, 100, 24 July 1956, and Shuckburgh, *Descent to Suez, pp.42-43.*
[398] Minute of 31 July 1956. NA DEFE 4/89 COS(56) 75th meeting.
[399] SUEZOHP 3, Transcript of interview with Sir Frederick Bishop, p.1.
[400] Shaw, p.35 and SUEZOHP: 3, 1989-91. Sir Frederick Bishop interview.
[401] Shaw, p.36.See also Clark and Shuckburgh.
[402] Thorpe, p.498.
[403] Cockerell, p.498.

broadcast in front of a crowd of 100,000 people in one of Cairo's main squares and a good deal of his strength both inside and outside of Egypt depended on propaganda and mass persuasion.[404] Turner makes the point that although he was not a natural demagogue Nasser had quickly learned the art of holding and manipulating an audience with dramatic pauses, the "gut-rending" appeal to the deepest emotions in particularly towards the evils of imperialism.[405] Kyle emphasises that he no longer talked in the stiff formal Arabic that he had formerly used, but in the Arabic of the streets in order to bring himself closer to his audience, speaking the way they spoke.[406] In the square the 100,000 plus audience had gathered at dusk after prayers and strategically-placed cheerleaders led the frenzied welcome when Nasser eventually appeared.[407]

Eden's bad start with the BBC was to develop into a more severe rift later in the crisis after he had heard a contribution on the Light Programme, on 15th August from Salah Salem, one of the original free officers who had taken part in the coup which overturned the Egyptian monarchy in July 1952. The programme was entitled '*Special survey of the Suez Crisis'* and Eden wrote to the chairman of the BBC governors Sir Alexander Cadogan in protest saying that the broadcast had given "a deplorable uncertain and hesitant and misleading" picture of British public opinion." It is interesting that this harassment of the BBC also occurred in Iraq 2003 when Prime Minister Tony Blair's Director of Communications Alastair Campbell criticised the BBC for not supporting the military action against Saddam Hussein, an area to be covered later in this dissertation, but pointing out to a commonality of approach by both prime ministers in attempting to coerce the BBC to support the government agenda.

Eden went on to tell Cadogan many people would judge the strength and

[404] Ajami, Fouad, 'On Nasser and His Legacy', *Journal of Peace Research* (Vol. 11, No. 1, 1974), p.42.
[405] Turner, Barry, *Suez: The Inside Story of the First Oil War* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2006), p.179.
[406] Kyle, p.132.
[407] Ibid.

determination of Britain by what they heard on the BBC.[408] The BBC's stance was to allow balanced political broadcasting, so much so that early in August 1956, the corporation refused to allow visiting Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies to appear on TV to talk about the Suez Crisis as the Foreign Secretary was already booked to make a radio appearance on 14th August. The BBC's temporary liaison officer between the political parties, John Green, blocked the Menzies broadcast on the grounds that two pro-government broadcasts in close succession would call the BBC's objectivity into question. Eden complained to BBC chairman of Governors, Sir Alexander Cadogan and the decision was reversed. Menzies made the broadcast. This was a primary indication that what Eden wanted was not a fair and impartial public service broadcaster, but a broadcaster which would, in essence be a mouthpiece for the government in time of war.[409] Again, there are comparisons here with Blair's perception of the BBC except that he relied on Alastair Campbell's advice. However, unlike Tony Blair, Sir Anthony Eden felt he could handle this role without professional help such as Clark, just in the same way that he appointed Selwyn Lloyd Foreign Minister knows full well that he (Eden) would be handling foreign affairs himself. Diplomat and Ambassador Sir William Hayter later said: "He (Selwyn Lloyd) had been put in the Foreign Office as a kind of Minister of State" adding "he had no personal initiative and was under Eden's thumb".[410] So Eden was taking on two additional roles at a time of crisis – Press Secretary and Foreign Secretary – unlike Blair who trusted the advice of his Director of Communications, Alastair Campbell.

William Clark later wrote that Eden was still caught up in "the old imperial dream" and failed in his decisions over Suez to take into account the shifts of power and influence produced by the Second World War and the end of empire.[411] In addition, Clark accused Eden's wife Lady Clarissa of keeping her husband away from all but true friends, guarding the door of No 10 "like a tiger". This isolation,

[408] Cockerell, 498.
[409] (Kelly & Gorst, p.136, Shaw, p.115).
[410] Suez Oral History Project, SUEZOHP: 6 1989-91.
[411] Clark, *From Three Worlds*, p.146.

Clark claims, prevented him from hearing and seeing the criticism of those in his own party, such as Sir Walter Monckton, criticism which may have made Eden rethink some of his decisions.[412] This internal criticism, even from within his own Cabinet, expressed itself in terms of leaks through the Lobby system where in return for privileged briefings, media Lobby correspondents agreed not to attribute the information published to their source. Patrick Gordon Walker, himself Foreign Secretary in the 1964 Harold Wilson Labour administration, makes the point that a group of ministers may leak to the press in an effort to get their policy accepted by Cabinet and, indeed, in the case of Suez, he says, there were extensive leaks about divisions of opinion in the Cabinet, forced by Eden's reluctance to discuss policy over Egypt with his colleagues.[413] In terms of agenda building literature, Cohen expresses this most pointedly in his study of the British Foreign Office, remarking that this method of leaking is used by individual ministers who disagree with a decision but cannot say publicly because of collective responsibility.[414] The use of such "unattributable briefings" is picked up by the media who then are more likely to concentrate on a "split" in the government rather than reflecting the "official" government line.

Not only ministers can use such methods; senior civil servants can use such a tactical manoeuvre in order to highlight what they regard as a wrong Ministerial decision, focus the media on it and, hopefully, force a change.[415] A former

[412] Ibid, p.156.
[413] Walker, Patrick Gordon, 'Secrecy and Openness in Foreign Policy', in Franck, Thomas M., & Weisband, Edward (eds), *Secrecy and Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.47.
[414] Cohen, Yoel, *Media Diplomacy: The Foreign Office in the Mass Communication Age* (London: Frank Cass, 1986), p.72. Hutton refers to the principle of "Cabinet responsibility" as being used by the prime minister of the day either to tie ministers into collective decisions or to exclude them by delegation decision-making to various Cabinet sub committees. He stresses that "A collective Cabinet decision binds all strands of opinion (within the Cabinet) to the government and prevents dissenting ministers from taking an independent line. [Hutton, Will, *The State We're In* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995), pp.34-35.]
[415] Cohen, p.15. Also, from the author's own personal experience working in several Whitehall Ministries. Cabinet Ministers may well use a leak to try and strengthen their view on a certain policy in the process of formation and undermine that of a Cabinet colleague who may well take a different view. The hope is to view media and other stakeholders' reactions to the leak and to then use any support gained externally to force internal changes in that policy within government. The usual source of leaks are special advisers, politically appointed civil servants who only remain in place

Downing Street special adviser Lance Price, deputy to Tony Blair's Director of Communications Alastair Campbell, refers to misleading the media by telling lies.[416]

This approach, if used in 1956, was not successful. Foreign Office officials had recognised that preserving existing interests was out of the question and had flagged this up to the ailing Churchill administration in which Eden was nominal Foreign Secretary but in whose area of responsibility Churchill consistently interfered.[417] So, when Eden did succeed as Prime Minister in 1955 he was mistakenly determined to run his own foreign policy as Prime Minister, continuing the same air of uncertainty as had Churchill and ignoring official advice.

Opposition to his own views made Eden dig in his heels and Clark referred to a crucial meeting of the Egypt Committee on August 2nd, 1956, where he (Clark) in the lead up to the invasion of the Canal Zone, had agreed with Earl Mountbatten, First Sea Lord, and Anthony Head, now Minister of Defence in succession to Monckton, to officially release some of the more obvious information which was already public knowledge. In a letter sent to his political chief Lord Hailsham, First Lord of the Admiralty Mountbatten referred to the Prime Minister's refusal to take this advice to put out press releases. Mountbatten had told Eden that three ships were to leave for Mediterranean in preparation for *Operation Musketeer* and that it would be common knowledge in the ports. He informed Hailsham: "Mr William Clarke (sic) his own press information officer, was present and strongly supported me, and suggested that press rumours and stories would get out of hand if they were not given a reasonable amount of information".[418] Eden refused, but the story still broke on that night's BBC Nine O'clock News.[419]

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during the office of the minister who appointed them. A civil servant is forbidden to carry out this type of ploy through the Civil Service Code which forbids involvement in any party political activity

[416] Price, Lance, *The Spin Doctor's Diary: Inside Number 10 with New Labour* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2005, p.33.

[417] Adamthwaite, Anthony, 'Overstretched and Overstrung: Eden, the Foreign Office and the Making of Policy 1951-55', *International Affairs* (Vol. 64, No. 2, Spring 1988), pp.256-259.

[418] Mountbatten Papers, MB1/N107. Folder 2.

[419] Clark, *From Three Worlds*, p.169.

Julian Amery, a war correspondent during the Spanish Civil War, a staff officer during World War II, and later a War Office minister in the Macmillan government after Eden's resignation following the Suez debacle, could view agenda building from media, military and government angles. He recorded that Eden was: 'Superficially engaging and attractive.' 'He would have made a great ambassador, brilliant negotiator, but he mistook diplomacy for foreign policy.' 'No good at delegating. As PM lacked 'an overall vision of a British role and interest.'[420]

The erratic nature of Eden's decision making was also referred to by Sir Norman Brook, Cabinet Secretary at the time of Suez and Britain's most senior civil servant, who over lunch told William Clark that the Cabinet had "blundered around a bit" not because Eden could not make up his mind, but because he came to a decision without full consultation with other Cabinet members.[421] As already noted, Eden, when he succeeded Sir Winston Churchill as Prime Minister in 1955, had decided to keep virtual control of foreign policy in his own hands, leaving his Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd as an administrator rather than as a policy originator.[422] This assumption of the role of Foreign Secretary as well as Prime Minister removed a key "checks and balances" in policymaking; Eden as Prime Minister was not likely to argue the point with Foreign Secretary Eden nor criticise the media policy of Press Secretary Eden.

Again, in the same way has he accepted only the intelligence which backed his own views, the customary relations between ministers and all but one or two officials were broken and all the other officials were neither consulted about nor even told what the government was doing. Eden refused to accept the advice from those on the ground, such as his own ambassador in Egypt, Humphrey Trevelyan, who had advised against military action over the Suez Canal. Trevelyan later wrote that

[420] Amery Interview, Suez Oral History Papers.
[421] Kyle, Keith, 'The Mandarin's Mandarin: Sir Norman Brook, Secretary of the Cabinet', in Kelly, Saul and Gorst, Anthony (eds), *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis* (Oxford, Frank Cass, 2000), p.47.
[422] Mathews, R.O., 'The Suez Canal Dispute: A Case Study in Peaceful Settlement', *International Organisation* (Volume 21, Issue 1, Spring 1987), p.96.

during the Suez affair " the customary relations between ministers and all but one or two officials were broken and all the other officials were neither consulted about nor even told what the government was doing."[423] Again, at the very top, although Selwyn Lloyd was all too aware of Eden's wish to keep control of foreign policy in his own hands it did not stop him trying to block what he saw was a wrong decision. Alarmed by Eden's bellicosity over Nasser, on 23rd August, and showing signs of "emotional strain", he asked US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to intervene with his own Prime Minister (Eden) since he was "the only person who could alter these plans".[424] Lloyd's Minister of State, Anthony Nutting, who later resigned over Eden's Suez policy, later wrote "our traditional friendships with Arab world were to be discarded" in what Nutting described as a "cynical act of aggression".[425] In addition, the soldier who commanded all forces on *Operation Musketeer,* General Sir Charles Keightley also doubted Eden's ability to win international support and warned that without this the military operation would fail. Keightley remarked that "Western world opinion" had to be won.[426] Similarly, Richard Powell, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence voiced his opinion that invasion "will turn world opinion against us".[427]

So, Eden had assumed the Foreign Secretary's role on top of that of Prime Minister. He had been selective in the use of intelligence to fit in with his own preconceptions. There was a breakdown of relationships between ministers and officials referred to by Humphrey Trevelyan. In addition there was the erratic nature of his decision-making, commented upon by his own Cabinet Secretary Sir Norman Brooke and his lack of confidence in his own Press Secretary William Clark leading him to give key media briefings himself. This lack of confidence in his Press Secretary was not true in the case of Tony Blair where, as will be demonstrated in

[423] Trevelyan, Humphrey, *Diplomatic Channels* (London: Macmillan, 1973), p.86.
[424] Cohen, Michael J., 'Prologue to Suez: Anglo-American Planning for Military Intervention in a Middle East War, 1995-1956', *The Journal of Strategic Studies* (Vol. 26, no. 2, June 2003), p.176.
[425] Heikal, Mohamed H., *Cutting the Lion's Tail: Suez through Egyptian Eyes* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1986), p.195).
[426] Adamthwaite, p.453.
[427] Adamthwaite, p.467.

the next chapter, his Director of Communications Alastair Campbell was in the middle of decision making, even attending Cabinet meetings.

How did all of these facts affect government agenda building aimed at winning national and international support from the media and public for British military action over Suez? The contention of this study is that on the research evidence Eden's tactical approach, to policy and to agenda building, was not thought out and not strategic and this will be examined further in the Conclusions and Analysis Chapter 6. However, before approaching that it would be prudent to examine the question of the government's use of propaganda in time of conflict and the dilemma faced by the media in this situation.

4.4. Crossing the line between media handling and propaganda

There is a dilemma for journalists when their own government goes to war, especially for those whose media opposed the government's action and what that media interpreted as an unwarranted use of force. That dilemma is clearly stated by three members of Cardiff University's School of Journalism who investigated the Falklands 1982 conflict. Mercer et al wrote:

"*In wartime some journalists agree with the more hawkish politicians and military officers that everything should be subordinate to winning the battle; others are unwilling to suspend either critical judgement or the peacetime pursuit of objectivity. In 1956 several British newspapers had opposed the Eden government's intervention in Suez and faced an acute dilemma over maintaining their opposition after British servicemen went into action."*[428]

In his study of the reactions of the British press during the Suez Crisis, Parmentier refers to the fact that newspapers who doubted the stance of Eden in July 1956, when Nasser nationalised the Canal, may have lifted these doubts as soon as

[428] Mercer et al, p.7.

military action was taken in October.[429] Shaw highlights this dilemma faced by two of the newspapers most critical of Eden's belligerent policy, the *News Chronicle* and the *Daily Mirror*. On October 31st , 1956, the day virtually all the newspapers carried news that British troops would be moving into Suez, both newspapers, Shaw says, were "conspicuously non-committal and affected by indecision".[430] The fact was that there had been government briefing (on October 30th, 1956 by Eden's Parliamentary Private Secretary Robert Allan) that the "paratroops would be going in the following dawn", a briefing that he, a political and not a civil service appointee, gave to journalists following Eden's ultimatum given in the Commons calling on both Egypt and Israel to withdraw their forces to a distance of ten miles from the Canal and to allow an Anglo-French force to temporarily occupy the Canal Zone.[431] Given that the *Operation Musketeer* plan was not for troops to be landed for another five or six days, this briefing could be construed as a psychological operations ploy designed to draw a line in the sand for the UK media; if they overstepped this line it would put them in a position of criticising, not supporting and possibly endangering British troops in action.

Indeed, the use of military force referred to by Robert Allan was picked up by Opposition Leader Hugh Gaitskell the next day when, in the House, he stated: "Last night, we begged the Government to give us an undertaking that they would refrain from using armed force until the Security Council had completed its deliberations or we had had another chance of discussing the matter here. I must say for myself that I had hoped, even after the Government's refusal to give us that undertaking, that wiser counsels might still have prevailed.

"We are this afternoon still left to some extent in the dark about what Her Majesty's Government have done. I must ask the Prime Minister now to repair the omission

[429] Parmentier, Guillaume, 'The British Press in the Suez Crisis', *The Historical Journal* (Vol. 23, No. 2, June 1980), p.438, although Parmentier points out that a firm stand against Egypt, in July-August 1956 would have met with much more support from the press than it did in October since the long delay which separated the shock of nationalisation and the ill-timed October military intervention allowed many periodicals to entirely change their attitudes.
[430] Shaw, p.72.
[431] Shaw, pp.70-71.

from his speech and to tell us, ‘Yes’ or ‘No’, whether, on the expiry of his ultimatum, instructions were given to the British and French forces to occupy the Canal Zone.”[432]

Future Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan interjected in the debate: “I am very grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for giving way. I should like to ask him a question to which 50 million people in this country will want to know the answer. Are British troops engaged in Egypt at this moment? Have they landed, or where are they?”[433]

Eden replied: “I am not in any way prepared to give the House any details—[HON. MEMBERS : "Resign."]—of the action which will follow the statement which I clearly made yesterday, that British and French forces will intervene in whatever strength may be necessary to secure compliance.”[434]

Conservative M.P. Viscount Hinchingbrooke, then accused Labour members of endangering the lives of British troops by asking for details of military movements. “What would our troops, who may be landing in Egypt at this moment, say about that? What will they say when they hear that their representatives in the House of Commons and the leaders of the Labour Party which they may be supporting have demanded that everyone, high wide and handsome, should be consulted about the Middle East? What about the danger of leakage to the enemy. There is the danger that the Egyptians might have been forewarned, or the Israelis might have been forewarned, as a consequence of asking for direct consultation all over the world in the face of military action. There is the risk to life and limb.”[435]

At this point the government appeared to have a strong argument in, as Hinchingbrooke said, in not making any announcement about troop movements

[432] Hansard, House of Commons debate *31 October 1956 vol 558 cc1446-572, p.1452.*
[433] Ibid,p.1453.
[434] Ibid.
[435] Ibid, pp.1465-1466.

for fear these would put the troops in peril. Indeed, in order to build up and maintain the level of public support required for war therefore newspapers, the main public opinion formers, needed to do the ministers' bidding (wittingly or unwittingly), demonizing Nasser and presenting the use of force as necessary. The result was arguably the most demanding and intensive propaganda campaign conducted by a British government since the Second World War. Did the government abuse its position by misleading the media through the use of less-than-truthful briefing and propaganda? This section will look at this question.

Former Permanent Secretary at the MoD Sir Frank Cooper later admitted in a recorded interview that Eden had sanctioned psychological operations or propaganda. "No-one could clarify what was white and what was black, what the purpose was and so on. In retrospect it was a failure at home and abroad."[436] This lack of clarity and direction was also commented upon in a recorded interview by Sir Arthur Dodds-Parker, in 1956 a junior minister in the Foreign Office whose verdict on Eden was "bad judgement, lack of integrity, falling into collusion and finally stopping it for lack of courage."[437] Mountbatten also took offence at government propaganda attempts, which continued after Eden had resigned, to put out a pamphlet justifying the actions over Suez. In a letter to General Keightley, Commander in Chief during *Operation Musketeer* and now at MoD, Mountbatten said that the pamphlet was "political instead of factual." Keightley replied that the pamphlet had been withdrawn, mainly due to pressure by Dr Charles Hill, the new Postmaster General and minister in charge of government publicity.[438]

In the period from Nasser's takeover of the Suez Canal on July 27, 1956, and the British-French-Israeli action in late October the same year, a basic strategy was

[436] SUEZOHP: 3 1989-91, p.6. In referring to "black" and "white" propaganda Cooper was taking the former to be deliberate disinformation designed to deceive and disorientate a potential enemy and the latter "slanted persuasion" by selected and weighted use of factual information. See Perloff, Richard M., *The Dynamics of Persuasion: Communications and Attitudes in the 21st Century* (London: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002), p.17.
[437] SUEZOHP: 6 1989-91, p.12.
[438] Mountbatten Papers, MB1/N109. General correspondence. 21 Jan 1957.

worked out to isolate Nasser both domestically and internationally with a gradual squeeze on the Egyptian economy in order to create internal dissatisfaction with his military regime. Under *Operation Omega*, black propaganda radio broadcasts were used to seek to split off Egypt from other Arab states with disinformation - raw material supplied by the embassy in Cairo. Mohamed Heikal, Nasser's confidant, later wrote that this black propaganda centred on Nasser's supposed ambitions to topple the old feudal states throughout the Middle East and take control of oil production for Egyptian ends and those of Egypt's supposed ally the Soviet Union.[439] Gorst and Kelly say that *Operation Omega* had the involvement of Cairo diplomat Ralph Murray who had been the founding head in 1947 of the Foreign Office's secret anti-communist propaganda section, with the innocent name of the Information Research Department (IRD). From early August black propaganda produced by this operation included radio broadcasts designed to undermine Nasser by appealing for a return to constitutional rule.[440] Egyptian morale was targeted by the use of psychological and propaganda methods to attempt to separate Nasser and his government from the Egyptian population and this was an integral part of the military preparations for Operation Musketeer.[441] The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templar, had used exactly this combination of psyops and military action to crush communist guerrilla action in Malaya in 1952-54, as he himself said: "The shooting side of the business is only 25 per cent of the trouble and the other 75 per cent lies in getting the people of this country behind us".[442] This is true to a certain extent, but if we take the example of Hitler's propagandist Josef Goebbels: "The most brilliant propagandist technique will yield no success unless one fundamental principle is borne in mind constantly - it must confine itself to a few points and repeat them over and over". Templar was militarily successful in Malaya and propaganda is more likely to be successful if you are the victor. Goebbels reflected on this in 1942: "Propaganda is easy…when you are winning

[439] Kelly & Gorst, p.15.
[440] Kelly & Gorst, pp.20-21.
[441] Gorst, Anthony, 'A Modern Major General: Sir Gerald Templar, Chief of the Imperial General Staff', in Kelly & Gorst, p.37.
[442] Cloake, John, *Templer: Tiger of Malaya* (London: Harrap, 1985), p.264.

the war," realisation having by then sunk in that Germany was going to lose.

British intelligence, stepped up its output of "black" propaganda against Nasser with the attachment of two figures from the wartime Special Operations Executive, one of whom was Sefton Delmer, now seconded from his post as foreign editor of the *Daily Express.* There would have been no objection to this from his proprietor, Lord Beaverbrook, a man close to Eden and who had already given his editor Arthur Christiansen orders "to support Eden in all our newspapers".[443] Both Delmer and his associate were attached to the British government funded *Arab News Agency* (ANA) which had offices throughout the Middle East but the Egyptian intelligence service in August 1956 denounced the ANA as an MI6 front and arrested 30 of its employees. Several, including Delmer, were expelled from the country.[444]

Murray, before he was transferred back to the UK at the height of the crisis to coordinate black propaganda, wrote to his old department, the IRD, expressing concern about "the greater degree of freedom given by the (Egyptian) regime to left-wing elements", adding that he feared this would allow communists to gain a foothold.[445] He suggested moves such as cultivating figures on the Egyptian left, especially trade unionists and journalists, the value of Egyptian participation in British Council exchanges and the charging of lower fees in British schools to attract left wingers' children.[446] By these moves Murray hoped to gradually build up a substantial level of opposition to Nasser and any moves to have closer relationships with the Soviet Union, moving Arab nationalist hostility away from the West and on to the Soviet Union. From 1953 the IRD had also sought to subvert the neutralist policy of Egypt and other Middle East countries in a propaganda campaign which included outlining the "lessons of history". A Central Office of Information pamphlet underlined the futility of neutrality against an

[443] Shaw, p.31.
[444] Turner, Barry, *Suez: The Inside Story of the First Oil War* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2006), p.-271-272.
[445] Vaughan, 'Cloak Without Dagger: How the Information Research Department fought Britain's Cold War in the Middle East, 1948-56', *Cold War History* (Vol. 4, no. 3, April 2004), p.65.
[446] Ibid.

aggressor by pointing out the fate of neutral Belgium in 1914 and 1945 and proposing that "neutrality" would not deter a Soviet Union determined to seize the area's rich oil reserves.[447]

On 13th April, 1956, the Cabinet Office's Official Committee on the Middle East met to discuss further ways of countering Nasser's brand of Middle East Arab nationalism and identified this as the greater threat to Western interests in the area than possible Soviet aggression. The IRD was given "a new charter" to include anti-subversive work in the propaganda and publicity work directed at Arab countries.

However, while one Cabinet Office Committee was supporting this line of propaganda another, the Joint Intelligence Committee, was predicting that any threats of armed intervention in Egypt were unlikely to bring down Nasser and would actually arouse the sympathy of Arab states.[448] The assessment, which Eden would have seen, read: "Should Western military action be insufficient to ensure early and decisive victory, the international consequences both in the Arab states and elsewhere might give rise to extreme embarrassment and cannot be forecast."[449] The sympathy of the Arab states for Nasser stemmed from his constant efforts to preserve Egypt's dignity and honour after years of humiliation imposed by British rule.[450] Nasser held that the Arab peoples had been mentally and spiritually held back for generations and that this had been a major obstacle to an Arab renaissance, along with the 19th century European colonialism which Eden, with his action over Suez, was attempting to retain.[451] It is also worth noting that Nasser, in promoting a secular state, viewed traditional Islamic institutions as reactionary and placed severe restrictions on their activity and used them to promote his own socialist ideology, He was determined that the state's activities

[447] Ibid, p.70.
[448] Craddock, pp.118-119.
[449] Cradock, pp.118-119.
[450] Ajami, p.45.
[451] Range, Willard, 'An Interpretation of Nasserism', *The Western Political Quarterly* (Vol. 12, No. 4, December 1959), pp.1005-6.

was not going to be overwhelmed by zealous clerics and that a religious colonialism would not replace the *de facto* military/political colonialism of the British in Egypt.[452]

Eden did not appreciate this view of the UK as an unreconstructed colonial power inspired by greed. Foreign Office Middle East Under Secretary Archibald Ross referred to Eden as not so much listening to advice submitted by the Foreign Office, but as using the Foreign Office to do "what he thought had to be done."[453] Three years earlier Mountbatten had been Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean Fleet when the military coup had overturned the Egyptian monarchy. He had taken a more pragmatic view and in an interview given to United Press International reporter, Harold Guard, he said it would be better "to establish friendly relations with Egyptians and support Neguib[454] regime" rather than spend a vast amount of money keeping troops there."[455] Mountbatten, here, was making a political comment which, as a military man he should not have. However, with his political experience as Viceroy, gained in the lead up to India's independence, he may well have felt safe in floating an idea in the media, hoping that it would take root in Whitehall. Using the media for such a ploy to advance a political goal is a common tactic as Cohen notes in his study of the Foreign Office.[456]

Good advice can be a brake on bad judgement, especially in handling the media, but by this time Eden had lost faith in his Press Secretary William Clark who earlier in the crisis had played a shrewd hand in keeping the BBC and the new commercial Independent Television News (ITN) on side. On July 31st 1956, he had given confidential briefings to the BBC's Sir Ian Jacob and ITN editor Geoffrey Cox. An old friend of Clark's, Cox later said that Clark had told them the

[452] Kepel, Giles, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2006), pp.46-47.
[453] Cradock, p.124.
[454] General Mohammed Neguib, a respected senior officer, was appointed by the Young Officer group as the titular prime minister and commander in chief of the Egyptian army, after the coup of 23 July, 1952. He was regarded as too moderate and was forced to resign in November 1954 in favour of the real leader of the coup, Colonel Nasser. British MI6 put him into the frame as a possible comeback leader in proposals made to Eden in 1956.
[455] Mountbatten Papers, MB1 H67, 24 February, 1953.
[456] Cohen, p.15.

government meant business, using his (Clark's) own authority as press spokesman to make an unattributable statement to the two powerful media chiefs, convincing Cox that Eden was intent on action. This was reflected in ITN's coverage which fulfilled Eden's plan of making it clear to Nasser that he was not bluffing, Shaw adds, quoting Cox's later memoirs.[457] This is a type of psychological warfare through the media to be returned to in the Iraq war chapter.

Clark, as a government spokesman, was essential to the media which, in many cases, becomes dependent upon such an "official source".[458] Yet despite Clark's background briefings, he himself was concerned about lack of clarity and direction. Describing a meeting he was called to at the Ministry of Defence on August 13th, 1956, he noted in his diary: "We dithered about press control. Ministers want the press to be quiet about our military preparations because they are *politically embarrassing* (my italics); but fool themselves into thinking that they are only asking for military censorship in the national interest." He goes on to say he is concerned that this can be achieved by the endless round of talking to newspaper editors.[459]

In terms of press control and the use of the more "dark" side of media management, Shaw highlights the dilemma faced by two newspapers critical of Eden's military plans, the *News Chronicle* and the *Daily Mirror*. On October 31st, 1956, the day virtually all the newspapers carried news that British troops would be moving into Suez, both newspapers, Shaw says, were "conspicuously non-committal and affected by indecision".[460] As previously noted in this chapter, the reason was that there had been an official briefing the day before by Eden's Parliamentary Private Secretary Robert Allan. Since the *Operation Musketeer* plan was for that not to happen for another five or six days, Allan's media briefing was

[457] Shaw, pp.108-109
[458] Page, Benjamin I., p.22. Page also cites Sigal 1973, Gans 1980, Bennett 1990 and Soley 1992, as underlining this media dependence on official sources.
[459] Clark Papers, Diary entry Aug 13, 1956.
[460] Shaw, p.72.

not a straightforward one but in fact was disinformation rather than information. It was, in effect, a psychological operations ploy to curb in advance any attack on the military adventure by Eden by opposing UK media, using psyops as an agenda-building weapon to target a specific audience into supporting, or at least not opposing, Eden's military and political objectives.[461]

On the international scene, Eden's policy over Suez was exploited for propaganda purposes by the Soviet Union as the brutal interference in the affairs of a small, weak country at the same time as the Soviet Union was considering using military force to suppress the 1956 Hungarian Uprising. U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles told President Eisenhower that U.S. efforts to disassociate the free world alliance from British imperialism would suffer immeasurable damage from such strong-arm tactics as would the influence of the West in the Middle East which, Dulles said, could be lost for a generation if not 100 years.[462] In terms of international agenda building – either winning friends and influencing people, or at least reducing their hostility – Dulles was more successful than Eden. By commenting that the nationalisation of the Suez Canal was only worrying to the USA if there was a threat to shipping, he implied that unhindered passing of ships through an Egyptian-controlled Canal was the USA's only worry. This caused the Egyptians to immediately drop their vitriolic denunciation of USA influence in the area as they demonstrated that they could operate the Suez Canal as efficiently and neutrally as had the Suez Canal Company.[463]

[461] Schleifer, Ron, 'A Century of Psyops: Psychological Warfare from the First World War to Lebanon', in Maltby & Keeble, p.151.
[462] Immerman, Richard H., *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign* Policy (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc, 1999), p.150
[463] Nimer, Benjamin, 'Dulles, Suez and Democratic Diplomacy', *The Western Political Quarterly* (Vol. 12, No. 3, September 1959), p.786.

4.5. The Protocol of Sèvres and the "excuse" for invasion

The inclusion of Israel in the British-French invasion plan *Operation Musketeer* was part of the plot to give a semblance of respectability to the takeover of Suez. A secret deal had been plotted at a meeting in the Paris suburb of Sèvres on 21st -22nd October, 1956, attended by Foreign Minister Selwyn Lloyd, French Prime Minister Guy Mollet and Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion.[464] Lloyd returned to London to report to Eden and in his absence the Israeli and French delegations, not trusting the British to deliver the military help discussed, drew up the agreement on paper. The agreement was that Israel would invade the Canal Zone to force a conflict with Egypt, allowing Britain and France to send in their own forces to separate the "belligerents" and protect free passage through the Suez Canal. Lloyd, suspicious of the whole project, did not wish to return to Sèvres and Eden sent JIC chairman Patrick Dean with Lloyd's Assistant Private Secretary Donald Logan back to Sèvres on Oct 24th 1956. Dean agreed to sign the three copies of the document produced but when he returned to brief Eden, the Prime Minister was horrified that the agreement had been put down on paper and ordered the British copy destroyed. The French and the Israelis, however, still had their copies.[465] Indeed, Kyle makes the point that there was later a systematic destruction of compromising documents involving the Suez crisis and Sèvres.[466]

A similar destruction of compromising government documents may have been carried out in the case of Iraq 2003. This may be a key to the research here and may open up an audit trail for future research when relevant government documents are deposited in the National Archives.

[464] Lloyd, Selwyn, *Suez 1956* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1978), p.180 and Thorpe, p.515.
[465] Thorpe, pp517-518. Also Shlaim, p. 526 who adds that Dean and Logan were sent back post haste to Paris by Eden in order to retrieve the French and Israeli copies of the Protocol but French Foreign Minister Pineau and Ben Gurion refused the request. The French copy has since disappeared but the Israeli copy remains in the Ben Gurion archives, in Israel.
[466] Kyle, p.4.

The Protocol of Sèvres, as it was called, was not released in the UK until 40 years later, in 1996. In the Commons, on 20th December 1956, Eden denied all knowledge of this collusion with France and Israel, a blatantly deceiving Parliament.[467] In the debate Eden said he was "not prepared to make public communications with other heads of governments."[468] Oborne describes Eden's eagerness to find an excuse for war partly for personal reasons as, "one of the worst examples of post-war mendacity.[469] Historian Avi Shlaim, who has examined the detailed notes of Colonel Mordechai Bar-On, secretary to the Israeli delegation at Sevres, points out that Eden wanted the excuse of an Israeli "invasion" of Suez but sent Selwyn Lloyd to the meeting, incognito, in order to avoid any involvement himself.[470]

At the UN on November 1st, 1956, the Hungarian revolution leader Imre Nagy contacted the UN to ask for recognition of Hungary's neutral status and to appeal for protection. However, the UN Security Council was already taken up with a resolution condemning Britain and France, supported by the USA and the Soviet Union, Britain and France voting against, using their veto. British ambassador in Moscow, Sir William Hayter, reported that it had given the Soviet Union a "heaven-sent distraction" from Hungary and allowed them to pose as champions of the United Nations and of an Arab country.[471] Hayter later reflected that he could not blame Nasser for the hostility to Britain after the Suez invasion, adding "we had behaved so badly there in this absurd Suez adventure which clearly had no future".[472]

Foreign Office junior minister Tony Nutting resigned in protest at the Sèvres agreement. William Clark, in a revealing statement in his diary, states that he was

[467] Kelly & Gorst, pp.153-154; Shaw, p.67 and Thorpe, p.544. Also in Shlaim, Avi, 'The Protocol of Sevres 1956: Anatomy of a War Plot', *International Affairs* (Vol. 73, No. 3, July 1997), p.509.
[468] Hansard, 20 September 1956, vol 562, p.208.
[469] Oborne, Peter, *The Rise of Political Lying* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2005), p121.
[470] Shlaim, p.516. Shlaim also stresses that Ben Gurion did not want to play the role of aggressor while "Britain posed as the peacemaker and basked in self-righteousness.
[471] Boyle, p561.
[472] SUEZOHP: 6, 1989-91, p.15.

asked by the Conservative Chief Whip's Office: "If I couldn't hint to the press that Nutting was terribly under the influence of his American mistress and anyway was not quite himself nowadays". Clark replied that this was "the sort of thing the Party did (Conservative Party), not me".[473] He acknowledged in a diary entry the same day that the week had been "the worst of his life" and continued:

"It seems to me that the PM is mad, literally mad, and that he went so that day his temperature rose to 105°. My mood towards him is extraordinary. I never see him, worn, dignified and friendly, but a surge of deep and almost tearful compassion surges up in me; I leave him and my violent bitter contempt and hatred for a man who has destroyed my world and so much of my faith burns up again. Then I long to be free as a journalist to drive this government from power and keep the cowards and crooks out of power for all time. God, how power corrupts".[474]

The Protocol of Sèvres and Eden's connivance with France and Israel was the last straw for Clark who had already lost Eden's confidence and he felt his position was untenable. He then resolved to resign which he did on November 5th 1956. Clark had faced the conflict of interests of being a former journalist, respected by his profession and one who had been appointed to a strictly Civil Service role, not a political special adviser's one.[475] The Civil Service, exists to serve whichever party is in government, but has a code which precludes civil servants taking a political rather than a governmental stance. Clark felt that Eden's policy, in particular his lying to Parliament, prejudiced his, Clark's, standards of press freedom and ethics.

In their investigation of media handling during the Falklands War, Mercer *et al*

[473] Clark, *From Three Worlds,* p.207, and Thorpe, p.562.
[474] Ibid, p.209.
[475] The Code was revised in 2006 but the section under which Clark resigned remains, broadly the same. It states: "You must serve the Government, whatever its political persuasion, to the best of your ability in a way which maintains political impartiality and is in line with the requirements of this Code, no matter what your own political beliefs are." Source, Cabinet Office.

made the point that even in a war for national survival, such as the Second World War, there was conflict between politicians, military commanders and journalists over the acceptable boundaries of press freedom. In limited conflicts, such as the British Suez operation in 1956, there was no guarantee that the media would support going to war at all.[476] Suez was not a war for survival; it was a conflict to restore the status quo, change a regime and protect British interests and access to Middle East oil.[477] There was opposition amongst the UK national media, but that dropped back briefly once troops were committed. Shaw notes that if news of the Protocol of Sèvres had leaked out, revealing the hand the UK had in fostering an Israeli invasion of Egypt, it would not only have wrecked the whole project but would have also threatened Eden's political survival.[478] However, once troops were committed there were dangers for UK newspapers opposing the war with owners and editors being scared that they would be seen as unpatriotic and that their sales would plunge.[479]

It was on the international front that Eden had completely failed to agenda build and win the support of non-aligned nations. He found himself isolated even from Britain's greatest ally, the USA, who voted against Britain and France in the Security Council, on the same side as the Soviet Union. Shlaim makes the point that the collusion with France and Israel was so transparent that it was obvious as a war plot.[480] Such transparency militated against Eden winning any international support for his agenda and the Suez fiasco was to leave a deeper mark on British policy makers than it actually did on the Egyptians and other Arab nations, according to a Foreign Office internal memo of 1961.[481] In the same year the Cabinet Secretary Sir Norman Brook, referring to Kuwait, wrote to Eden's

[476] Mercer et al, p.311.
[477] Turner, p.439. Egyptian sabotage of the Canal blocked it for six months. Other oil pipelines were also cut forcing Britain and France to introduce petrol rationing.
[478] Shaw, p.68.
[479] Greenslade, p.137
[480] Shlaim, p.528.
[481] Ashton, Nigel John, 'A Microcosm of Decline: British Loss of Nerve and Military Intervention in Jordan and Kuwait, 1958 and 1961', *The Historical Journal* (Vol. 40, n0. 4, 1997), p.1069 and National Archive (hereafter NA) FO371/157389 Johnston-Stevens, 16 Mar 1961.

successor Harold Macmillan: "We are still pursuing our traditional policy of extracting oil concessions from an autocratic Ruler in return for military concessions. It is doubtful whether this policy is realistic in the circumstances of today."[482] This compared unfavourably on the international scene with Nasser's determination to secure "national dignity" for Egypt.[483] What an agenda-building appeal this was for other Arab states such as Algeria, trying to free themselves from colonialism, but also for Third World former colonial states such as India and Yugoslavia, which under Tito had broken away from Stalin and the Soviet bloc. Eden, enmeshed in colonialism, possibly perceived as a prisoner of his past and not thinking strategically either as a policy maker or a positive image maker, could not match this international appeal.

Labour politician Denis Healey, later a Secretary of State for Defence himself, described Suez as a demonstration of moral and intellectual bankruptcy. He added: "In execution it was a political, diplomatic and operational disgrace".[484] Healey makes the point that Eden was ill and mentally unbalanced, an opinion shared by Bill Deedes, later editor of the Daily Telegraph but then a junior minister in the Eden government[485]. Eden was not in control of his temper and reason through, partly, taking copious amounts of drugs for a painful medical condition affecting his gall bladder, Deedes reflected in his memoirs.[486]

4.6. Attempts to censor the BBC

The BBC, the public service broadcaster but now with a fledgling competitor in ITN, had a particularly strong role in preserving balanced reporting of events. This was in contrast to the mainly right-wing supporting national newspapers

[482] Ashton, p.1083 and NA PREM11/3430 Brook-Macmillan, 13 Sept, 1961.
[483] Range, p.1011.
[484] Healey, p.169.
[485] Healey, p.404; Deedes, W.F. *Dear Bill: W.F. Deedes Reports* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p.122.
[486] Deedes, p.122. Also in SUEZOHP 8, p.6. In this interview the UK Ambassador to the Soviet Union at the time of Suez, Sir William Hayter, said that the bile problem Eden had and the medication he was taking was "notorious for affecting your judgement".

whose proprietors exercised their own agenda of a shared interest in maintaining Britain's world status and her empire, with the caveat that they had to be convinced that Eden was determined to hit back at Nasser**.** Eden still had to cultivate them and convince them of his imperialist credentials, which had been attacked by the *Daily Express* as "A Day of Shame" when Eden had made the Anglo-Egyptian agreement of 1954 to evacuate all British troops from the country by July 2006.[487]

However, Eden during the Suez Crisis Eden showed himself unhappy with the BBC's approach, despite the fact that the chairman of governors was his former colleague Sir Alexander Cadogan. There was a further conflict of interests here since Cadogan was also one of the government directors of the Suez Canal Company, enhancing the risk of a potential conflict of interests.[488] Despite the apparent closeness of Cadogan to the government a rift between Eden and the BBC reached the point of attempted censorship by the Prime Minister and Eden contemplating taking over the BBC, a fact denied by his own biographer Thorpe.[489] Yet this was substantiated from other sources such as William Clark who in a diary entry of August 16th 1956, noted that he had been at the Home Office for a meeting on censorship of the press and added: "I was struck with the extent to which the BBC was regarded as completely under government control".[490] The Suez Crisis was to cause a rocky patch in many establishment relationships including the "common-law marriage" of the BBC and the government".[491] In 1956 the BBC was vulnerable to political pressure, funded as it was by a licence fee decided by the government of the day, though in ITV's case the dependence on advertising revenue was the vulnerable point.[492]

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[487] Shaw, p.29.
[488] Thorpe, p.497.
[489] Thorpe, p.499.
[490] Clark Papers, Box 160 Downing Street Diary, 16th August, 1956, and Shaw, Tony, 'Cadogan's Last Fling', pp.138-9.
[491] Lashmar, Philip & Oliver, James, 'Britain's Secret Propaganda War', in Franck & Weisband (eds), p.63.
[492] Seaton, Jean & Curran, James, *Power with responsibility: The press, broadcasting and new media in Britain* (London: Fontana, 2003), p.170.

The government's attempts to control the BBC during the Suez Crisis are shown quite clearly in a letter from Foreign Office Permanent Secretary Sir Ivonne Kirkpatrick to his opposite number at the Cabinet Office Sir Norman Brook. The letter, which was only placed in the National Archives in 2007, 50 years after the Suez Crisis, reads:

"I saw Sir Ian Jacob today and told him that Ministers were preoccupied about the state of the overseas services. I said that there were two powerful schools of thought, one of which was disposed to favour governmental control of the overseas services and the other, the curtailment of the £5m grant in aid to the B.B.C and its expenditure in other propaganda exercises.

"Sir Ian looked stricken like a mother about to be deprived of her child. He denied the Home Service was lowering its standards and claimed that the Overseas Service was doing its job. He defied an impartial inquiry to come to any other conclusion.

"I told him he might be right, but that I had felt obliged to warn him that Ministers were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the BBC in general and with the expenditure of £5m a year on its overseas services.[493]

"I said it was unlikely that this subject would be raised in an acute form until after we had finished with the Suez crisis. I undertook to keep in touch with him should there be any new development.

"If any departments have any cause for complaint against the BBC I should be glad to have particulars for use in my next conversation with Sir Ian."[494]

[493] Shaw, p.99.The Foreign Office gave the BBC a grant for its overseas services which meant that the BBC could be susceptible to political pressure if that grant was withdrawn, that is to say if the UK government was unhappy at some aspects of the BBC's coverage, such as during the Suez crisis. Also Turner, p.349

Eden would have been briefed on this letter by Brook, and may have reflected on the wartime control exercised through the Ministry of Information which by 1945 had grown into a huge organisation employing 2,205 people in the UK and 3,652 working overseas and dedicated to releasing government news, organising press trips and facilities to military bases and providing pictures of actions and battles.[495] Harking back to the Second World War and BBC coverage, Curran and Seaton make the point that the BBC also viewed news as a part of propaganda with the caveat that home propaganda, the keeping up of domestic morale, depended on an informed public and telling people what was happening.[496] In contrast, the view of Nazi propagandist Josef Goebbels was that 'News policy is a weapon of war. Its purpose is to wage war and not to give out information.'[497]

This is an aspect to be examined with regard to the embedded media system in Iraq 2003 which, it is contended, was created exactly for the purpose as laid out by Goebbels, and was put into operation by the UK and USA in the Iraq 2003 conflict.

In the Second World War the UK's Ministry of Information, through wartime legislation, also exercised great supervision of the BBC, and through the BBC engaged in psychological warfare, geared closely to military and political strategy.[498] William Clark told BBC executive Harman Grisewood that Eden contemplated taking over the BBC and making it an instrument of war at the end of

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[494] NA FO 953 PB1011/43. From I Kirkpatrick to Mr Rennie and Sir Norman Brook. Aug 28, 1956. Many government documents related to Suez remain unreleased. Since 1987, under the 30-year rule, some of the remaining declassified records have been made available at the National Archive. Documents, such as this one, continue to be released on a piecemeal basis. This author has had sight of several due to be released shortly, thanks to the co-operation of the FCO Historical Section.
[495] Marett, Sir Robert, *Through the Back Door: An Inside view of Britain's Overseas Information Services* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1968), p.27. Philip Knightley also makes the point that in "wars of national survival" such as World War II, control of war correspondents will be even tighter and accepted by the journalists because in wartime proprietors will consider their commercial and political interest lie in supporting the government of the day. Knightley, P., *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Kosovo* (London: Prion, 2001) as quoted in Hargreaves, Ian, *Journalism: Truth or Dare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.105.
[496] Curran & Seaton, p.146.
[497] Ibid.
[498] Marett, pp.49-50.

October 1946.[499] On 5th August, 1956, Chancellor of the Exchequer Harold Macmillan visited Winston Churchill, who as wartime Prime Minister had exercised censorship of the media and who now urged that his successor Eden do the same.[500] Eden may have thought that what had applied in 1940 did not apply in 1956 but he did, however, put vigorous pressure on the BBC to deny the right of reply to Opposition Leader Hugh Gaitskell after his (Eden's) broadcast to the nation on November 3rd in which Eden said he was convinced that the military action over Suez was right.[501] Cadogan allowed the Gaitskell broadcast although he and others disliked any implicit condemnation of the British forces about to go into battle. Yet a *quasi* censorship was put into place by someone in authority since the troops on the way to Egypt heard the Eden broadcast over loudspeakers on board ship, but the Gaitskell reply was confined to officers only in the wardrooms.[502]

In addition, Grisewood had had further pressure put on him by Tory Chief Whip Ted Heath when he (Grisewood) had told Gaitskell that the BBC would raise no objection to a right of reply. Heath, himself under pressure from Eden, told Grisewood that a right of reply could only be claimed if it could be proved that the minister (Eden in this case) had been controversial or biased.[503] The invasion of Egypt, which had been hotly debated that day in Parliament, could hardly be labelled "uncontroversial."

Yet within the BBC itself, senior officials were unhappy and had expressed concern about the Corporation's failure to balance coverage of the Government's stand and opposing points of view, criticism which Cadogan refuted.[504] The previous week, October 26th, Cadogan and his Director General Sir Ian Jacob had met the Deputy Prime Minister R. A. Butler to protest at the Government's threat to reduce the

[499] Cockerell, p.499. Shaw, 'Cadogan's last fling, p.138. The government threatened to cut the BBC's overseas budget by one fifth.
[500] Cockerell, p.505.
[501] Cockerel, p.256.
[502] Cockerell, p.256.
[503] Clark, *From Three Worlds,* p.207.
[504] Shaw, Tony, 'Cadogan's Last Fling', p.137.

BBC's External Services Budget from £5m to £4m.[505] The timing of this budget cut was surely intended to shock the BBC into collective obedience before the military action over Egypt took place and to underline this the Corporation was obliged by Butler to have a Foreign Office official install himself at Bush House, from which BBC External Services broadcast, to "advise the BBC on the content and direction of their overseas programmes".[506] Mr A.D.M. Ross, of the Foreign Office's African Department also wrote to his Information Policy Department to complain about an unpatriotic BBC. He said: "The BBC are (sic) the last to understand our guidance just as they are in a position to do the greatest harm by taking the wrong line."[507]

The day before Butler's visit to the BBC, in a Commons debate on 25 October 1956, Eden appeared not to be putting any pressure on the BBC, answering a question saying: "Apart from news interviews, I have made one broadcast on the Suez Canal situation. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary has also made one on the same subject and one on the occasion of United Nations Day. He has also taken part in a discussion programme."[508] A Member of Parliament Mr Woodburn interjected: "I take it that this also includes television broadcasts. Is the Prime Minister aware that they sounded, more like apologies than statements?"[509] This interjection may point towards Eden's apparent failure to win vital support in the House and a critique of his television technique.

William Clark, Eden's Press Secretary, said that what especially irked Eden was the daily BBC *Press Review* widely listened to in the Arab world and which gave full weight to the attacks on his policy by media such as the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Observer.* Clark stated: "It was in an attempt to deal with this running sore that

[505] Shaw, pp.138-9.
[506] Ibid.
[507] NA FO 953B1041/79. Aug 9, 1956. Letter from ADM Ross, African Dept to Information Policy Dept.
[508] Hansard, *25 October 1956 vol 558 cc826-7, p.826.*
[509] Ibid.

various attempts were made to control the BBC, chiefly in its external services."[510] The BBC had been under pressure to respond to Nasser's own radio station *Voice of the Arabs,* a very efficient service initiated in the early 1950s and containing a great deal of anti-British and anti-Western commentary. From 1953 the BBC had been asked to respond with anti-Nasser propaganda but refused since that would have lost the audience's trust in its accuracy, according to Gordon Waterfield, then head of the Eastern Service broadcasts to the Middle East.[511]

Kenneth Lamb, Director of Public Affairs for the BBC during the Suez Crisis and a member of the BBC's Board of Management, has underlined the BBC External Service's high reputation for objectivity. Commenting in the *Report of the Independent Committee of Enquiry into the Overseas Information Services, April 1954*, to which he gave evidence, Lamb stressed that this reputation for objectivity had to be maintained at all costs and that the BBC would deplore any attempt to use it for "direct propaganda of the most obvious kind". He added that the "best and most effective propaganda to many countries consists of a factual presentation of the news and of British views concerning the news".[512]

Commenting on Suez, Lamb admitted that it had posed "exceptional problems" to the BBC in terms of it being an issue which could lead the country to war and on which the country was "deeply and sharply divided", but added that the BBC must reflect all these opinions and not just those of the Government or the Foreign Office who, he added, saw the job of the BBC broadcasts as being to show a united country.[513] This was the point of conflict with Eden and also the point, according to Lamb, when the BBC was "abruptly informed" that the grant-in-aid given by the Foreign Office, would be cut substantially (by £1m, a fifth of the budget).[514]

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[510] Clark, William, 'Cabinet Secrecy, Collective Responsibility, and the British Public's Right To Know about and Participate in Foreign Policy Making', in Franck, Thomas M., & Weisband, Edward (eds) *Secrecy and Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.214.
[511] Lashmar & Oliver, p.64.
[512] Lamb, Kenneth, 'Disclosure, Discretion and Dissemblement: Broadcasting and the National Interest in the Perspective of a Publicly Owned Media', in Franck & Weisband (eds), p.234.
[513] Lamb, p.235.
[514] Lamb, p237, and Shaw, pp. 138-9.

Further pressure on the BBC came in a Motion for Adjournment on the BBC Charter on November 14, 1956, from Peter Rawlinson, Conservative MP for Epsom then but later Solicitor General and Attorney General in three successive Tory administrations. His motion carried the words that there had been a "widespread impression" that the BBC had not maintained its standards of impartiality over the crisis in the Middle East.[515]

Rawlinson was a back bencher but an up-and-coming figure within the Conservative Party and there is no doubt that this was a government-planted question.[516] Any UK government has the budgetary big stick to hand in terms of dealing with the BBC, through setting the licence fee as well as the grant-in-aid given to BBC External Services.

The BBC, as a funded public service broadcaster, can come into conflict with government, especially during a military operation, where secrecy is necessary to preserve military security and the lives of soldiers. Yet, in the case of Suez secrecy was used to hide facts which the public should have had at their disposal in order to come to their own decisions on the rights and wrongs of the matter. Distinguished journalist Anthony Sampson comments in the case of Suez that the rule here was that everything was kept secret unless until the government decides "it wants the public to know what is going on."[517]

Suez was to be the first crisis of the television era when what began as a military success and an attempt at regime change turned into a political disaster ending with the ignominious resignation of the Prime Minister.[518]

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[515] Lamb, p.237.
[516] Planted questions are a common tool in policy agenda building. I have been involved in them where ministers have prompted a back bench MP from their party to ask a question to which the minister can then respond with the answer already prepared by his policy team.
[517] Sampson, Anthony, 'Secrecy, News Management, and the British Press', in Franck & Weisman, p.13.
[518] Robinson, N., p.115.

4.7 Nasser v Eden: Comparisons in agenda building

British propaganda may have been able to cope with the relative simplicity of the Cold War, but in the more complex case of the Suez Crisis it was not so easy to produce a good case for British intervention.[519] In the West versus the Soviet Union, it was far easier to portray white and black, freedom versus tyranny, democracy through the ballot box versus imposed Communist quisling governments. Chapman gives an example of this "simplicity" of approach in 1948-49 with the rise of Communist China, the 'Yellow Peril' added to the Soviet Union's 'Red Peril and the emergence of 'gung-ho' media over-enthusiasm with both America and Russia attaching top priority to winning over opinion at home and internationally by using the media to influence content.[520]

However, in the case of Suez how could Britain justify the invasion of a sovereign state for perceived financial gain with the spurious claim that Nasser was a Communist lackey, when there was no evidence for this? British propaganda efforts just did not work on the international stage at least, although it may have to a certain extent in winning UK national media support where government claims over Egyptian "communism" on the one hand conflict with Eden's own condemnation of Nasser as a fascist. Eden wrote in his own diary: **"**Some say that Nasser is no Hitler or Mussolini. Allowing for a difference in scale, I am not so sure. He has followed Hitler's pattern, even to concentration camps and the propagation of *Mein Kampf* among his officers. He has understood the Goebbels' pattern of propaganda in all its lying ruthlessness."[521] This, indeed, was turning a blind eye to the truth from a Prime Minister who engaged in the propaganda war himself, but Eden's views here fit well with the self-delusion of those in power in

[519] Rawnsley, Gary D., 'Introduction', Rawnsley Gary D (ed), *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s* (London: Macmillan, 1999.
[520] Chapman, *Comparative Media History,* p.209.
[521] Eden, p.431.

Western liberal democracies that propaganda was something only the enemy engaged in.[522]

Aburish makes quite clear that Nasser was equally willing to send to his concentration camps members of the Egyptian Communist Party and those of the right wing Muslim Brotherhood, the latter supported by the Eisenhower administration as being seen as avowed anti-communists.[523] Nasser would accept arms and other support from the Soviet bloc, but not as a satellite.[524]

Searle, commenting on UK government attempts to win over world opinion states that while jingoism may have won over a majority of the British public to support the invasion of Egypt, Nasser was being saluted as a hero by the leaders of many non-aligned and shortly-to-be decolonised nations and the UK had lost the support of the USA.[525]

Propaganda was certainly involved on both sides, but in the case of Nasser he won much more international support for his efforts than did Eden. Eden's perception of the role of the media in successful agenda building by a government made him fear the effect that Nasser was having**.** Third World governments saw the extent to which Arab nationalism could defeat former imperialist powers, in particular through Nasser's use of his radio station *Voice of the Arabs* to achieve these aims.[526] Nasser's expert use of radio put real concern into the minds of the Eden government since as well as it bringing national support in his own country; Eden feared the destabilising effect of it throughout the Middle East. The invention of radio in the late 19th century had altered for all time the practice of propaganda with its ability to send messages across borders

[522] Taylor, Philip M., 'Through a Glass Darkly? The Psychological Climate and Psychological Warfare of the Cold War, p.226. The station was founded in 1953 by Nasser with the help of CIA funding (Shaw, p.4).
[523] Aburish, p.128.
[524] Aburish, p.128.
[525] Searle, Chris, ' "And his name is Nasser": cricket and the Suez crisis', *Race and Class* (Vol. 43, No. 1, 2001), p.64.
[526] Taylor, p.238.

and over long distances.[527] In this vein Mohamed Heikal, editor of Egypt's semi-official newspaper *Al Ahram*, and a propagandist and ghost article writer for Nasser, stressed that Nasser's attractiveness to other Arab peoples, if not necessarily their governments, was of a nationalist rebel searching for dignity and alternatives in the world political system.[528] *Voice of the Arabs* commanded a much bigger audience in the Middle East than the British-sponsored *Near East Broadcasting* because of its attractive anti-colonial message and appeals for the rights and dignity of the common Arab.[529] Indeed, the *Voice of the Arabs* was so potent that the French, fighting their own war against Algerian nationalists, set up a "Free Egyptian" radio station broadcasting in Arabic at a frequency close to *Voice of the Arabs.* British radio also pumped out rival broadcasts from Libya, Cyprus and Aden.[530] The British Cyprus operation was Sharq-*al-Adna* based at a Cyprus village called Polymedia and gave a programme of music and drama which allowed for the almost imperceptible insertion of pro-British comment.[531] Yet it was *Voice of the Arabs* and Nasser's passionate broadcasts on it to an eager Arab audience which converted hundreds of people to his cause every day.[532]

Boyd describes *Sharq-al-Adna,* renamed as the *Voice of Britain,* as a "propaganda disaster" in his analysis of the station's output.[533] He adds that when the Suez War started virtually all the Arab announcing and production staff (many of whom were Palestinians or Egyptians), quit or were fired after announcing on air that they were on Egypt's side.[534] The station's theme was "Britain loves the Egyptian people but Nasser is an evil man" and broadcasts

[527] Jowett & O'Donnell, p.129.
[528] Ajami, p.43.
[529] Aburish, p.80, Shaw, p.5 and Turner p.271.
[530] Turner, Barry, *Suez: The Inside Story of the First Oil War* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2006), p.271,
[531] Ibid.
[532] Aburish, Said K., *Nasser: The Last Arab* (London: Duckworth, 2005), p.95.
[533] Boyd, Douglas A., 'Sharq Al Adna/The Voice of Britain: The UK's 'Secret' Arabic Radio Station and Suez War Propaganda Disaster', *Gazette: The International Journal for Communication Studies*(Vol. 65, No. 6, 2003), p.443.
[534] Boyd, p.251.

citing eight Egyptians who would be acceptable to Britain in a new Egyptian government only helped to increase Nasser's popularity and credibility since two of the eight were already dead.[535]

Egypt and Britain had made an agreement in October 1954 the terms of which would result in the complete withdrawal of British forces by June 1956, some 74 years after the "temporary occupation" of Egypt began. Nasser could then gain great credit in the Middle East as the man who had kicked out the British and within six weeks of the last British troops leaving he completed the process of freeing Egypt from foreign interference by nationalising the Suez Canal. This made him the dominant figure in Middle East politics, but also a potent force in the Third World.[536] The use of radio was one of his main tools in building up his prestige and power outside as well as inside Egypt and this gave him significant advantages over Eden who may well have achieved domestic media backing in the main, but failed to build any supportive agenda internationally, had unsuccessfully sought to build up a picture of Nasser as a serious and ideological threat to Britain and the Free World.[537]

Nasser put something more into his broadcasts which stirred the Arab soul – passion – and it was through a passionate speech on *Voice of the Arabs*, on 26th June, 1956, that he gave a signal for his troops to take over key canal points. His declaration provoked a 10-minute ovation from the crowd gathered to hear him in Menshira'h Square, in Cairo and united the Egyptian people and their parties.[538] This actually rescued Nasser from a precarious position since the long-term stability of the regime depended on the evacuation of British forces from Egypt,

[535] Boyd, p.451.
[536] Thornhill, Michael T., 'Britain, the United States and the Rise of an Egyptian Leader: The Politics and Diplomacy of Nasser's Consolidation of Power, 1952-4', *English Historical Review* (Vol. CXIX, No. 483, 2004), p.892.
[537] Shaw, p.190.
[538] Searle, Chris, 'And his name is Nasser': cricket and the Suez crisis', *Race and Class* (Vol. 43, No.1, 2001), p.61.

and that opposition to his rule came not only from other parties but from other figures within the military junta.[539]

Eden received the news at 10.15pm while holding an official dinner at No 10 Downing Street for 'friendly' Arab leaders of the Baghdad Pact, including King Feisal of Iraq.[540] Eden, despite training from a young BBC broadcaster called David Attenborough, lacked that passion and had no real feel for projecting himself compared with later Downing Street practice as run by Bernard Ingham, for Mrs Thatcher, and Alastair Campbell, for Tony Blair.[541] Eden himself noted that every effort had to be made to prove Nasser was in the wrong and at the same time public opinion in this country and the world "should be prepared to support any action we eventually might take".[542] Public opinion, contrary to myth, was generally in favour of Eden and in November 1956, at the height of the crisis, his approval rating as Prime Minister, stood at 52 per cent, compared to 42 per cent for the Opposition leader, Hugh Gaitskell.[543] Yet this could be put down to the public's reluctance to be seen as not supporting the troops on the ground, the same feeling which, as previously noted here, led newspapers previously critical of Eden's military plans, to tone down their opposition. Nevertheless, while the troops had landed in Suez Eden's government was in disarray and the Parliamentary Opposition, unusually in a national emergency, was solidly against him. Most of the oil-producing nations and nearly all the oil-importing countries were convinced Eden was wrecking their economies and even Commonwealth nations were to lobby world opinion against him.[544] What support Eden had, as reflected by the poll above, came from die-hard Conservatives and imperialists and those unwilling to "stab the troops in the back."[545]

[539] Thornhill, p.922.
[540] Thorpe, p.475.
[541] Cockerell, p.499.
[542] Thorpe, p.490.
[543] Cockerell, p.503.
[544] Turner, p.397
[545] Shaw, p.194.

Eden, contrary to his own words quoted above, failed in winning international support. General Sir Charles Keightley, later noted that world opinion "is now an absolute principle of war and must be treated as such" adding that purely military operations would fail in their object unless Commonwealth and Western world opinion was firmly on the British side.[546] In this Keightley would have been referring to Western *political* leaders' opinion rather than media which could have varying views. The key support would have been from the USA; it never came and would never come according to Sir Walter Monckton who constantly objected within Cabinet to armed intervention in Suez on the grounds that it would "inflame Arab opinion against us in the Middle East" and that it "would jeopardise our relations with the U.S which was the foundation stone of our international defence policy".[547]

In an MoD paper examining all aspects of the military operations in Suez Keightley directly criticised Eden's conduct of media policy and lack of international agenda building stressing that the lack of a strategic media plan "*resulted in shortcomings in press communications and arrangements which we never managed to rectify in time."*[548]

Turning to Nasser's propaganda techniques, Monckton made the shrewd observation that anyone who had studied the Middle East and had experience of Middle East countries would have observed how propaganda had been used to support Nasser's ambitions and "his dream of an Arab-Egyptian empire from the Atlantic to the Gulf." In an insight which certainly escaped Eden, his own Prime Minister, Monckton added "violent, abusive insistent, hostility to us, crude it may have been, but persuasive in the territories in the Middle East and Africa to which it was addressed".[549] Eden, according to his Commonwealth Secretary (and later Prime Minister) Lord Home, "saw red" when he heard Nasser's radio broadcasts

[546] Shaw, p.196. Also Adamthwaite, 'Suez Revisited', p.453.
[547] Monckton Papers, Box 8, no. 41.
[548] DEFE 110/029/56. Operation Musketeer Public Relations Committee, 24 September 1957.
[549] Moncton Papers, Box 34, no.42

(Eden was a fluent Arabic speaker) since Nasser reminded him so acutely of Hitler. Home said that, in retrospect, that parallel was not justified.[550] In comparison to Nasser's effective radio broadcasts, *Sharq Al Adna/Voice of Britain* was, according to Boyd, an embarrassing display of military and diplomatic ineptitude from a country otherwise experienced in radio warfare.[551]

Nasser's style is clearly laid out in a telegram from the British Embassy in Tripoli to the Foreign Office in which a Mr Watson refers to the Libyan newspaper *Tarablus al Gharb* and an editorial praising Nasser and attacking the French and their allies for daring to criticise Nasser's annexing of the Suez Canal. The telegram also contained a cutting from the newspaper *Al Zaman* which analyses the success of Nasser in winning Middle East support. The article says that Nasser discarded protocol by divulging state secrets to his people. He told the people of all the difficulties standing in his way. He expressed the innermost emotions to the people and had caught the world out by his bold act of nationalisation of the Suez Canal and the transfer of its income to the State Treasury.[552] One of the main themes of the British propaganda war was that Britain's quarrel was not with the Egyptian people but with Nasser alone and the British Embassy press secretary in Cairo, John Tull, gave daily briefings and guidance to journalists to this effect. On August 17th, the *Daily Express* correspondent in Cairo wrote an article attacking Nasser which included attributed off-the-record comments by Tull, a serious breach of diplomatic etiquette. Nasser responded that very same day by pointedly giving interviews to rival correspondents, including John Slade Baker of the *Sunday Times.*[553]

Unlike Eden, Nasser did not rage about critical articles, he acted to counter them and as his reputation grew he was visited by a steady stream of journalists and political figures looking to meet him and talk to him. These included three Labour

[550] SUEZOHP:8 1989-91, p.1.
[551] Boyd, p.454. Also in Kyle, p.416-7 and p.451.
[552] NA FO 371/119096, Aug 4, 1956. From Mr Halford, Tripoli, to Mr Watson, African Department.
[553] Thornhill, Michael T., 'Alternatives to Nasser: Humphrey Trevelyan, Ambassador to Egypt', in Kelly & Gorst (eds), pp.22-23.

Party figures who became the mainstays of the UK opposition to Eden's use of force, Aneurin Bevan, Barbara Castle and Richard Crossman and Heikal says that Nasser liked to hear arguments and views which were not quite his own.[554] Evidence already quoted here points to Eden taking the opposite point of view and preferring arguments which supported his stance.

Nasser's own agenda building worked in gaining international support in the way that Eden's failed. During the lead-up to the British landings at Suez Nasser watched "with fascination" films of the Trafalgar Square meeting with a speech of his friend Bevan, and the visible strength of opposition to Eden. So by Monday, when the landings actually took place, Nasser could see that failure was inevitable. All plans for the Egyptian leadership to go underground and preparations for a guerrilla war were cancelled.[555] MPs in London could even hear the roars of protest from the crowd in the Commons chamber, at the other end of Whitehall.

Nasser's opposition to the new, from 1948, Israeli state was quite clearly on record. He had described its creation as a result of "imperialism" maintaining that if Palestine had not been under the British mandate Zionism would never have been able to muster up enough support to realise a national home there.[556] His anti-Israeli and pan-Arab rhetoric made him popular throughout the Middle East in the way that the British propaganda efforts did not really capture. Nasser's adviser Mohamed Heikal comments on this and says that in foreign policy, Nasser was giving a great deal of attention to the wider Arab world that lay beyond the frontiers of Egypt. He knew his ideas were being echoed by people in many other Arab countries and to reach them he had set up the *Voice of the Arabs.* Heikal adds: "Over the next three years its influence was to become immense. Perhaps the most

[554] Monckton Papers, Box 8, no. 41.
[554] Heikal, p.45.
[555] Heikal, p.195.
[556] Nasser, G.A., p.98.

telling tribute was the fact that its transmitters were among the RAF's first targets when the British began to bomb Egypt in November 1956".[557]

The British IRD never exploited radio as effectively as did Nasser, as a medium to get directly to the people, to hear the voice, to gauge the emotion of the speaker (Nasser) to be moved by that emotion and to support Nasser's agenda. Range, in his analysis of *Nasserism,* refers to Nasser's tactic of using demagoguery to arouse Arab nationalism because he believed it could not be aroused effectively by calm reason and gentle persuasion. Yet in private, Nasser revealed himself to those Western journalists who have interviewed him as a man of moderation and tranquil rationality.[558]

The mainstay of IRD activities within local media outlets was to prepare articles for insertion into newspapers, magazines and journals and even then editors were reluctant to take them because of the lack of journalistic and editorial appeal.[559] The IRD resorted to bribery but the point was made by diplomatic sources on the ground in the Middle East that the fact an editor had to be bribed pointed to the article not being of much interest to his readers in the first place.[560] In comparison to this the policy of Nasser to effectively articulate Arab nationalism in the face of the imperialist threat from the old colonial powers, revolving around a powerful set of populist appeals elevated the principles of 'anti-colonialism', 'independence', 'sovereignty', and 'dignity' to positions of prime importance.[561] This ran counter to the IRD's anti-communist output which was tailored the same for other areas of the world and did not take into account the appeal of Nasser over the radio, an appeal noted again by diplomats on the ground one of whom criticised the effectiveness of British radio broadcasts into the region in comparison with *Voice of the Arabs*. One diplomat noted: "Being Arabs, they prefer lively emotional broadcasts to cold factual

[557] Heikal, p.42.
[558] Range, pp.1013-4.
[559] Vaughan, p.61.
[560] Vaughan, p.61.
[561] Vaughan, p.66.

stuff".[562] But the IRD did supply the BBC with negative and scurrilous material about Nasser which was transmitted from Aden, Cyprus and Libya.[563] It had little effect on Nasser who had won the airwaves battle "hands down", as Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, the British Ambassador in Cairo stressed in a telegram to the Foreign Office containing the draft of a Nasser speech made at a university rally on August 2, 1956. Here is an extract which conveys the emotional approach of Nasser:

"O citizens of youth, youth has always been lying in wait for imperialism. They have struggled for many years and never abandoned their right to live. Egypt is united we go ahead in our path to confirm our liberty ad independence. She has declared her policy of neutrality for the sake of peace, justice and humanity at large, her opposition to military blocs and her refusal to engage in the trade of war. The Suez Canal was dug with our blood and which cost Egypt the death of 120,000 of her sons."[564]

Trevelyan notes that the same day he made another speech, this time at a scout camp, telling the young audience: "With unity and mutual faith of the Arab countries, Arab nationalism can stand in the face of tyranny and imperialism and can liberate Arab countries which have not yet been liberated".[565] His technique worked for him in both national and international agenda building whereas Eden failed in the latter.

4.8. Eden's failure at internal and external media agenda building

Was public relations considered seriously enough by Eden? Even in 2009, 53 years after the Suez Crisis, documents which touch on information handling policy are still absent from the files at the National Archives. Certainly Eden managed to build up

[562] NA, FO 1110/942/PR10104/91/G, Tripp to Gualt, 29 June, 1956.
[563] Searle, p.63.
[564] NA FO JE14211/99, Aug 2, 1956. From Trevelyan to FO. Text of Nasser speech at University week rally.
[565] Ibid.

a climate for war very successfully in the early stages of the crisis but he could not maintain this over the whole three months leading up to the Suez invasion.[566] He failed to sustain his media agenda building support within the UK; he failed ever to gain it internationally. The British public was deeply divided as was Eden's own Cabinet; even his own senior Royal Navy adviser, Earl Mountbatten offered his resignation in protest over military action.[567]

Former *Spectator* editor Bruce Page makes the point that popular journalism has drawn successive layers of society into political decision-making and in the case of Suez he points out that the *Daily Mirror*, although it did not build its five million audience of 1936-1967 on those passionate about politics, provided potent opposition in "two of British power's worst abusive interludes, the 1930s appeasement and Suez 1956".[568] The *Mirror* was in a minority in 1956, says Page where most of the press "failed dismally" in shining a true investigative light on Eden's policy of invading Egypt.[569] Yet was this not a success for Eden in terms of successful agenda building? Had he not brought most of the UK media with him and their readers?

He may have won support from the majority of the British media but there was opposition within his own Cabinet and party, opposition within Parliament and, a key factor, widespread international opposition including that of the USA. The time was past when "gunboat diplomacy" was a tool to be used by British Prime Ministers, a fact which Eden did not factor into his agenda building plans. He had isolated himself from his own press officer, he had isolated himself from intelligence which did not fit in with his own conception of Nasser, and he had isolated himself from military and Cabinet colleagues whose advice may have reined him into offering a more peaceful solution to the crisis instead of an ill-considered invasion. Tulloch writes that Eden's resignation, on January 9th, 1957, on "health grounds"

[566] Shaw, p.192
[567] Healey, Denis, *The Time of My Life* (London: Penguin, 1989), p.171.
[568] Page, Bruce, 'It's the media that need protecting', *British Journalism Review,* (Vol. 17, No. 1, March 2006), p.26.
[569] Page, p.27.

was best seen as a palace coup within the Conservative Party under US pressure.[570] His successor Harold Macmillan had long-standing personal relationships with President Eisenhower and documents in the Eisenhower's Presidential Library in Abilene show that Macmillan had been in contact with the White House in November 1956 to try to restore normal relationships with the USA. In the memorandum of one meeting held at the White House on November 20th, Eisenhower referred to Cabinet changes in the UK and the "outstanding" abilities of Macmillan. Eden was not mentioned.[571] Kyle also refers to the close relationships between Macmillan and Eisenhower and Macmillan's visit to Washington on 19th November 1956 when he indicated that Eden would "go on vacation and eventually retire" making it easier for the Cabinet to vote to withdraw British troops from occupying Suez.[572]

It is crucial for any government media agenda-building plan that it is strategic, reasoned and clearly thought out in order to get to those whom it wishes to influence, nationally and internationally and internally. If it is not then this offers the media the opportunity to provide their own interpretation of the information. Negrine, writing in 1996, said the media's role had traditionally been seen as the watchdog, one holding governments to account with the idea that "neutral journalism" probing politicians puts the media in a superior and judgemental position. Yet, is this may not be the case in an industry where the private media are only accountable to their proprietors and the increasingly self-important and enhanced role may be taking the place of, or become a replacement for, public participation in the political debate[573] Chapman makes the point that there is an argument for the fact that the media are compromised by their dependence on advertising and the requirement to satisfy shareholders, patrons and owners.[574] Labour politician Aneurin Bevan, a fierce

[570] Tulloch, p.46.
[571] Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene. *Memorandum of conference with the* President(November 20, 1856), p.1.
[572] Kyle, pp504-5.
[573] Negrine, p.22.
[574] Chapman, p.105.

opponent of the Suez invasion, labelled newspapers supporting Eden as "the most prostituted press in the world, most of it owned by a gang of millionaires".[575]

Nevertheless, despite winning substantial media support at the start of the Suez crisis in July 1956, that support ebbed away and there was no strategic media handling strategy in place to retain it.[576] In August 1956, Cabinet Secretary Sir Norman Brook advised Eden that the use of force was becoming unpopular and that there could be a split in the Cabinet. Eden's failure in the long run to bring his Cabinet with him, his self–isolation from colleagues and the breaking down of internal communication links as Clark and others have described, it is difficult, if not impossible to produce a strategic and successful media agenda-building plan. It is suggested that there cannot be successful external communication without successful internal communication, which is why, at least until the fall of Baghdad in 2003, the Blair government succeeded in successful agenda building whereas Eden failed. The success of the Blair government's internal communications will be examined in the next chapter.

The point has already been made in this section on the Suez Crisis that Eden had an obsession to remove Nasser by military means. That obsession led him to selectively use intelligence which fell in with his own erroneous belief, contrary to the evidence, that Nasser was a communist tool of the Soviet Union. That obsession also led him to ignoring advice from Cabinet colleagues, ignoring his own press adviser, ignoring advice from his own military chiefs and producing a government media handling agenda which may have at the start of the Suez Crisis won domestic media support. Yet this support was won without the media being aware of all the facts, especially those surrounding the Sèvres agreement and the involvement of Israel in which Eden lied to the media and the nation. *The Times*,

[575] Greenslade, p.46.
[576] Greenslade says that if at the start of the crisis in July, most newspaper comments were calculated to spur Eden on to use force, this was not the case by August. By then four daily newspapers, the *Guardian, Mirror, Herald* and *News Chronicle* (combined circulation 7.7 million) were against war and four dailies*, Express, Mail, Sketch* and *Telegraph* (combined circulation 8.3 million) backed Eden. The *Times* backed Eden up to the invasion. Greenslade, p.133.

which had supported Eden from Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal, changed sides once hostilities had started. The newspaper felt it had been used by Eden all along through his confidential briefings of its editor Haley, and its foreign editor McDonald.[577]

The Sèvres agreement was kept secret from most of the Foreign Office and Eden lied about collusion with Israel to Parliament. This collusion for each country's own reasons – Britain believing Nasser was undermining its Middle East position; France knowing that Nasser was aiding and abetting the rebels in Algeria and Israel resenting Egypt's organisation of terrorist raids into their territory and preventing their shipping from using the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba - was denied by Selwyn Lloyd in Parliament on 31st October, 1956, and by Eden later on December 20th, 1956.[578] Thomas notes in his 1967 study of the British Press during the Suez Crisis that at this crucial point there was hostility from nearly all of the press, with the exception of the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Sketch.*[579] Within Eden's own government Foreign Office Minister of State, Anthony Nutting denounced this participation in what he called "a sordid manoeuvre" and claimed it would cause a rift between Britain and the United States, split the Commonwealth and unite the Arab world against Britain.[580]

Eden did not listen to advice and selectively used the intelligence which fitted in with his own preconceptions. Successful policy agenda building relies on accurate information to build to a solid foundation, accurate information as contained in an as yet to be declassified despatch from British diplomat P. H. Lawrence, in Israel. Dated November 10th, 1956, this casts doubts on Eden's speech to Guildhall a few days before in which he gave his government's reasons for intervention in Suez as one to keep Israel and Egyptian forces apart. The telegram points out to strong

[577] Shaw, p.70.
[578] Warner, Geoffrey, ''Collusion' and the Suez Crisis of 1956', *International Affairs* (Vol. 55, No. 2, April 1979), p.229.
[579] Thomas, Hugh, *The Suez Affair* (London: 1967), p.133.
[580] Warner, p.233. Nutting made this strong statement at a meeting of British ministers on October 16, 1956, but it was rejected by Eden who went ahead with talks with the French which led to the Sevres agreement.

evidence of collusion with Israel including units of the French air force being stationed in Israel long before hostilities broke out. The telegram states "the French have managed to conceal their real intentions from HM Government", points out that relationships with Arabs states and vital oil supplies have been jeopardised and that the "confidence of the US government in us has been shaken".[581] Mr Lawrence, by this time, may have been writing with tongue in cheek by not referring to Anglo-French collusion rather than just French collusion with Israel. Long-time British propagandist Robert Marett also referred to the weaknesses of British anti-Nasser propaganda when he said that anyone with average intelligence can think up a propaganda line to suit a particular situation, but it will be of no value unless there is the men and machinery to put it across.[582] This study suggests that the "men and machinery" were present in Iraq 2003 but not in Suez 1956.

However, there is the message to consider and the audience to whom it is directed and the British propaganda line to demonise Nasser did not work against a line from Nasser which appealed more to the Middle East mind – anti-colonialism, independence and dignity. This was the warning to Eden from the JIC which assessed that any threats of military action to bring Nasser down were unlikely to do so and would only arouse the sympathy of Arab states for Egypt.[583] Marett differentiates between Arab support for the Allies in the Second World War where there was a traditional Arab respect for the British people combined with a realisation that the defeat of Germany might more quickly lead to Arab nationalist aspirations.[584] However, as soon as the German danger was removed, Marett adds, the UK had no longer any message which could conceivably appeal to the Arab because of the UK's involvement in the Israel/Arab dispute and the UK's need to protect the Suez Canal and the oil fields when the UK's interests came "slap up against those of the Arab nationalists."[585]

[581] FO 371/121798. From PH Lawrence, Levant Dept., Israel, Nov 10, 1956. Seen by the author.
[582] Vaughan, p.77.
[583] Cradock, pp.118-119.
[584] Marett, p.94.
[585] Ibid.

Keane proclaims that "the nasty business of lying in politics" is a characteristic of democratic governments as well as other non-democratic regimes.[586] Yet the media can lie as well as governments, although in terms of the Suez Crisis the media which supported the government and their readers who supported them were swept along by a swell of patriotic fervour in which balance and objectivity were the real casualties of war. Edward Said's theory of *Orientalism* argues that Western (occidental) culture is saturated with negative images of the Arabs who are portrayed as irrational, menacing, untrustworthy, anti-western and dishonest, exactly the image Nasser was trying to deal with in fighting for the aspiration of "national dignity", an aspiration some British media did not appreciate. [587] American historian Willard Range, writing only three years after Suez 1956, and well before Said published his theory, said that Nasser had repeatedly expressed his contempt at Western perceptions of the Arabs and the West's failure to grasp their yearning for national equality and almost pathological suspicion of any attempts to maintain supervision or control over them.[588]

In the context of conflict this would lead to a disregard for Arab communication and encourage a greater willingness to attack Arab states.[589] The Arab is seen as a disrupter of the West and Israel's existence and who, through oil (or control of the Suez Canal in 1956) threatens the West's existence. [590] All credit then to media such as the *Mirror*, as Page has pointed out, who ignored the stereotype, were not caught up in jingoism and asked the questions other media should have been asking. All credit, too, should be given to the BBC who, despite improper pressure from Eden did its best to uphold its own Charter and the ethos of public service broadcasting.

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[586] Keane, John, *The Media and Democracy* (Cambridge UK: Polity Press, 1991), p.10.
[587] Range, p.1015
[588] Range, p.1009.
[589] Robertson, John W., 'People's Watchdogs or Government Poodles? Scotland's National Broadsheets and the Second Iraq War', *European Journal of Mass Communication* (Vol. 19. No4, 2004), p.460.
[590] Said, Edward, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1995), p.286.

Shaw states that Eden certainly built the climate for war in the early stages of the Suez Crisis with newspapers such as the *Daily Express* holding to the imperialist past policy of its owner Lord Beaverbrook[591]. This is a stark contrast to the 1956 coverage of the *Daily Mirror* which took a line contrary to Eden's media agenda building. One of the great innovative newspaper editors in terms of investigative reporting was Harold Evans of the *Sunday Times* and in referring to the 1899-1901 Boer War he labels the atmosphere in Britain as too jingoistic and with a perverted sense of patriotism.[592] This could equally have been applied to media coverage of the 1956 Suez Crisis, a media coverage which, on the whole, followed Eden's agenda building (such as it was) and certainly gained national support. Yet it dismally failed to extend that to international support, so much so that 48 hours after the military landings at Suez the war was stopped, due mainly to international pressure from the USA. That pressure was done through the International Monetary Fund which, without American backing, refused to bail the UK out of its serious financial crisis which it was then going through, without withdrawing from Egypt and coming to a peaceful solution to the crisis. It also led to Eden's resignation as Prime Minister, ostensibly on "health grounds" and his replacement by Harold Macmillan.

The lack of international support was referred to in a reflective Ministry of Defence paper from General Sir Charles Keightley, Commander in Chief Allied Forces during *Operation Musketeer*. Entitled *Operations in Egypt November to December 1956* and dated 24 Sept 1957, it reviewed all aspects of the military operation and was favourable towards the purely military aspects. However in a last paragraph Keightley directly criticised Eden's conduct of media policy and lack of international agenda building. The paragraph reads:

[591] Shaw, pp.192, 30-31. However, even when its own reporter with the troops landing at Suez, Donald Edgar described the devastation created at Port Said by air attack, the *Daily Express* held back his reports, believing instead British military press releases which referred to "hardly any damage" in Port Said.
[592] Evans, Harold. 'Propaganda versus professionalism', *British Journalism Review* (Vol.15, No.1, 2004), pp.37-38.

"*In modern days world opinion is a most important weapon of war. This was fully appreciated at the outset by myself and my staff but regrettably the short notice which we had before operations started resulted in shortcomings in press communications and arrangements which we never managed to rectify in time."*[593]

Once military action starts it is easy for any government to play the patriotic card and attempt to curb press criticism by claiming it endangers the troops. Walter Monckton, no longer Minister of Defence due to his internal, but not publicly expressed, opposition to military action and still in the government with new responsibility for coordinating government PR, refers to this in a diary entry of 23rd November, 1956. He had received a letter from *Daily Mirror* editor Hugh Cudlipp which criticised Anthony Head, Monckton's successor at MoD. Head was quoted in the publication *Everybody's Weekly*, dated 3rd November, 1956, saying: "The easiest thing in the world is to spread discontent among the troops who haven't enough to do." Cudlipp took umbrage at this and pointed out to his own service with 8th Army in the Second World War. He also referred to the Territorial Army and pointed out that despite objections to the Eden military action, the *Daily Mirror* had urged reservists "Do your duty – whatever your grievance".[594]

Mountbatten refers to the lack on international support in a letter to the First Lord of the Admiralty Lord Hailsham, sent on 2nd November, 1956 in which he also quotes General Keightley telling him that the plan (Operation Musketeer) would "make the whole of the Middle East almost untenable and would entirely defeat the objects which he thought the Government had in view."[595] Mountbatten also criticises Eden's failure to gain international support for his agenda, quoting the same letter to Hailsham:

[593] DEFE 110/029/56. Operation Musketeer Public Relations Committee, 24 September 1957.
[594] Monckton Papers, Box 8, 217.
[595] Mountbatten Papers, MB1/N106. Recollections dated 8 September 1965.

"I felt that in doing so (attacking Egypt) we would be acting against the charter of the United Nations which we ourselves had done so much to build up," and adding "it would lose us any support in the Arab world".[596]

Indeed, Mountbatten's determination to set the record of Suez straight and defend his own position was baulked by Eden's successor as Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, who in 1963 imposed a special embargo on records relating to the Suez Crisis of 1956. This meant that ministers or officials could not consult records relating to Suez without the express permission of the Prime Minister. Macmillan's embargo, primarily intended to prevent Lord Mountbatten gaining access to the Suez archive.[597] Eden had lost the internal support of Mountbatten and others such as Keightley, Monckton and Clark, he had failed to gain international diplomatic support, but he also failed in public diplomacy, attracting little support from the international media. The Normandy-style invasion of Suez, with the build-up and time factor involved in assembling the forces, moved international opinion already sympathetic to Egypt further away from the UK.[598] Two days after Mountbatten's letter, on November 4th, 1956, Soviet forces entered Budapest in massive numbers to crush the Hungarian uprising. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev later admitted in his memoirs that the Politburo had been riven with indecision about "crushing the mutiny" but the Suez Crisis reinforced the decision to use force and influenced the timing of the Soviet operation.[599] Suez was a welcome distraction as the British Ambassador in Moscow, Sir William Hayter, warned in a cable to London on 2nd November, 1956. He said that the Russian change of stance over Hungary "was largely because they saw us taking the law into our own hands in Suez".[600]

Unlike the Blair government in Iraq 2003, Eden failed in media agenda building. There was no real media strategy in his plans, other than personal talks to editors

[596] Ibid.
[597] National Archives, Release of Suez Records, 2009.
[598] Turner, pp.168-9. Shaw, p.193, also refers to the condemnation of Eden's action as "crooked" by sections of the American administration and the mass media.
[599] Boyle, p.250.
[600] Adamthwaite, *Suez Revisited,* p.458.

and the use of propaganda, often "black propaganda" at that. Governments have to use carefully crafted communications strategies to ensure they get "good press" for their policies.[601] He also failed to effectively use television which by then was in two-thirds of British homes and, in his Prime Ministerial broadcast of 8th August 1956, he had not learned his script as he had in previous interviews, and was forced to wear spectacles to read the script in large type. He looked uncomfortable and, according to his Press Secretary William Clark, believed that "these communists in the BBC" were deliberately shining the studio lights in his eyes.[602] Prime Minister Tony Blair, in contrast, looked comfortable on television and gave the impression to both interviewer and viewer that he was engaging with the question.[603]

Eden certainly did not face the problem of dealing with the satellite and internet age and 24-hour reporting as did Blair, but he recognised that something had to be done when in the immediate aftermath of the crisis he appointed Charles Hill, a former broadcaster, as Postmaster General, to undertake a comprehensive review of the Government's information services.[604] Hill, in his memoirs, refers to his review and is scathing about the lack of guidance given to government spokesmen by the Eden administration. He said that despite the lack of success in government media handling during Suez, in his restructuring of government communications he still found ministerial colleagues suspicious of anyone talking to the media.[605] His findings were particularly critical of the presentation of the UK Suez case overseas, but also of the lack of access by press office professionals to their ministers and the perception by permanent officials of press officers as a "necessary evil".[606]

For Eden in the Suez Crisis there was a failure in policy agenda building in terms of winning international support and, more crucially, support from the Middle East

[601] Negrine, Ralph, *The Communication of Politics* (London: Sage, 1996), p.10.
[602] Robinson, N., p.117.
[603] Ibid., pp.316-317,
[604] Shaw, p.195
[605] Hill. Lord Hill of Luton, *Both Sides of the Hill* (London: Heinemann, 1964), p.179.
[606] Hill, p.185.

states. William Clark recounts a conversation with King Hussein of Jordon when Clark was later working for the World Bank. The king asked if Clark had been involved in the Suez affair, and when Clark replied that he had, King Hussein said: "What a tragedy; the day that Britain finally fell off its pedestal, particularly around here."[607] There was a failure to build an agenda with the USA which wished to avoid any disruption to essential oil supplies and forced the UK to withdraw from Suez by withholding $600 million financial guarantees needed to relieve the country's financial crisis.[608] President Eisenhower offered the UK these guarantees on 20th November 20, 1956, with the proviso that the UK and France withdrew from Suez, which they did on 21st November.[609] The US secret negotiations were with Harold Macmillan, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Deputy Prime Minister R.A. Butler and not with Eden, negotiations which Eisenhower personally authorised at the November 20th White House meeting. At the same meeting Eisenhower authorised Deputy Secretary of State Herbert Hoover, Jr, to assure Arab nations that the USA was putting great pressure on trying to get the troops out of Suez and re-establish the oil markets.[610]

There is irony in the statement made by Eden in 1937 when he was Foreign Secretary: "Good cultural propaganda cannot remedy the damage done by bad foreign policy" adding "even the best of diplomatic policies may fail if it neglects the task of interpretation and persuasion which modern conditions impose".[611] In highlighting this quote Nye was referring to his concept of "soft power" and Eden's understanding in 1937 of the necessity of combining good foreign policy with interpretation and persuasion, a policy he did not follow in 1956.

Eden, in 1956, was determined to use "hard power", the use of force as a matter of policy. In order to retain support for the use of force a key tool was to win the

[607] Clark, *From Three Worlds,* p.214.
[608] Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. *Memorandum of conference with the President* (November 21, 1956), pp.1-2.
[609] Ibid.
[610] Ibid, p.3.
[611] Nye, p.101.

backing of the bulk of the UK media in order to use their influence to gain the support of their readers. He had a smaller media field to influence in 1956 than did Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2003 yet Eden forgot his own 1937 words in that this influence had to have a persuasive and justifiable foreign policy in a democratic society in order to build up a persuasive and effective media agenda building policy.

Four years after Suez, when Eden published his memoirs, he was still blind to his failures in media and policy agenda building. He quoted his own statement of 14th December, 1956, when departing from London Airport for a holiday in the West Indies. He defended his actions and said: "We were right, my colleagues and I, in the judgements and decisions we took, and that history will prove it so."[612]

History has not. Suez showed that Britain could no longer act in world affairs in a manner seriously politically at variance with its senior partner and protector the United States.[613] William Clark, in his 1974 essay, put it succinctly when commenting on the lessons future Prime Ministers could learn from Suez: "One cannot successfully lead the country into a military adventure without preparing public opinion."[614] And to reach the public and mould public opinion, this does involve a successful media agenda building policy which brings the media on side, a fact which will be examined in the following Iraq 2003 Chapter.

[612] Eden Memoirs, p.574.
[613] Boyle, p.564. Clark, *From Three Worlds*, p.214. Also Moorcraft & Taylor, p.75.
[614] Franck & Weisband, p.216. Also in Parmentier's study of the British press during Suez, p.447, where he underlines that Suez was a failure in terms of public relations which, in a democratic country, constitute an essential element of a government's policy.

5. Iraq 2003

5.1 Background to the 2003 Iraq conflict

The publicly-stated purpose of the United States' going to war in 2003 was "regime change" – to rid that country of the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. U.S. President George W Bush emphasised the urgency of this course of action on January 28, 2003, in his nationally televised state of the union address.[615] In a similar vein, as quoted in the Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram, British Prime Minister Tony Blair said: "Our quarrel is not with the Iraqi people but with Saddam, his sons and his barbarous regime which has bought misery and terror to their country."[616] In a speech to the House of Commons on 18th March 2003, Blair committed the UK, subject to a Parliamentary vote, on backing President Bush and taking military action to remove Saddam, repeatedly accusing the Iraqi leader for failing to disclose the presence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in his country.[617] Regime change, therefore, as in Suez 1956, was on the UK government agenda.

Blair told the 'House: "It has not proved possible to secure a second Resolution in the UN because one Permanent Member of the Security Council made plain in public its intention to use its veto whatever the circumstances; notes the opinion of the Attorney General that, Iraq having failed to comply and Iraq being at the time of Resolution 1441[618] and continuing to be in material breach, the

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[615] Mian, Zia, 'The Empire of Fear', in Vanaiik, Achin (ed), *Selling US Wars* (Moreton-in Marsh, Gloucs: Arris, 2007), pp.154-155.

[616] Snow, Nancy, 'From Bombs and Bullets to Hearts and Minds: U.S. Diplomacy in an Age of Propaganda', in Kamilipour, Yahya R. & Snow, Nancy (eds) *War, Media and Propaganda* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), p.19.

[617] Kampfner, John, *Blair's Wars* (London: The Free Press, 2004), p.308 and Hansard, House of Commons debate, 18 March 2003, c760.

[618] Resolution 1441 said: "*Recognizing* the threat Iraq's non-compliance with Council resolutions and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles poses to international peace and security,*Recalling* that its resolution 678 (1990) authorized Member States to use all necessary means to uphold and implement its resolution 660 (1990) of 2 August 1990 and all relevant resolutions subsequent to resolution 660 (1990) and to restore international peace and security in the area. *Further recalling* that its resolution 687 (1991) imposed obligations on Iraq as a necessary step for achievement of its stated objective of restoring

authority to use force under Resolution 678 has revived and so continues today; believes that the United Kingdom must uphold the authority of the United Nations as set out in Resolution 1441 and many Resolutions preceding it, and therefore supports the decision of Her Majesty's Government that the United Kingdom should use all means necessary to ensure the disarmament of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction; and offers wholehearted support to the men and women of Her Majesty's Armed Forces."[619] Blair's Chief of Staff Jonathan Powell says that it is all but impossible to win a Security Council vote to legitimise (in the UN's eyes) military action against dictators.[620]

In a January 28, 2003, Blair's speech had referred to WMD, adding: "The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."[621] This bought in the question of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) being in the hands of Saddam Hussein, a fact later disproved but enough to raise fears in the West and win Bush and Blair sufficient, but not majority, media and public support for intervention and regime change just as the nationalisation of the Suez Canal in July 1956 had given Eden substantial media and public support. If the Bush and Blair fears over WMD, and their continuing public relations policy exposing these fears were calculated to win support for intervention before the invasion of Iraq, the embedded reporter system was put in place to sustain that support during the actual conflict, an agenda-building tool Eden did not have.

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international peace and security in the area. *Deploring* the fact that Iraq has not provided an accurate, full, final, and complete disclosure, as required by resolution 687 (1991), of all aspects of its programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles with a range greater than one hundred and fifty kilometres, and of all holdings of such weapons, their components and production facilities and locations, as well as all other nuclear programmes, including any which it claims are for purposes not related to nuclear-weapons-usable material.

[619] Hansard, House of Commons debate,18 March 2003, c760.

[620] Powell, p.264.

[621] Sylvester & Huffman, p.7. Note: Bush also implied that Saddam had WMD and US presumptive action would be based on a UN Security Council resolution requiring Saddam to fully disarm. On March 17, 2003 Bush gave Saddam 48 hours to leave Iraq or be removed by force. By this time most journalists were in Kuwait or embedded with their assigned troops. Months of positioning satellites and preparation were about to pay off with the most advanced equipment any journalist had taken on the battlefield.

Britain's ambassador in Washington, Sir Christopher Meyer, reflected that the failure to find weapons of mass destruction (WMD) was hugely embarrassing to Tony Blair "who had rested his case for war solely on Saddam's failure to disarm". Yet Meyer asserts that in fact Saddam was buying off France and Russia through supplies of discounted oil, illegal under the UN interdict, in exchange for weapons, most of which went unreported in the media.[622]

Saddam had failed to comply with a UN Security Council Resolution and to readmit inspectors to his country to search for WMD and, in his memoirs, Meyer recounts the diplomatic to and fro in Washington and London as to whether to wait for a new Security Council Resolution, or to go ahead and invade Iraq. That resolution (USCR 1441) came on November 8th 2002 and offered Saddam the final opportunity to admit the weapons inspectors, which he did and the team returned to Iraq in November after a four-year absence. However, Meyer points out the weakness of Resolution 1441 in that its wording threatened "serious consequences" if Saddam failed to comply and did not specify war. Yet President Bush was determined on regime change, as he said in his State of the Union speech to Senate and Congress on January 29th, 2003, calling it "a crusade against evil.[623] Meyer, who retired early in 2003, reflected that there were too many mistakes and misjudgements in the lead-up to the conflict which helped alienate world opinion but continues to maintain that Tony Blair, far from being an American "poodle", was acting from "the highest of moral ground".[624] This may have been the case, but as in the UK military action against Egypt in Suez 1956, it lacked the international legitimisation conferred by a UNSCR such as was the case in 1991 when the United Nations passed a resolution giving Iraq until January 1991 to pull out of Kuwait.[625] Also, in 2003, the Coalition had only four members - USA, UK, Australia and Poland, although Colin Powell, now US Secretary of State, claimed there was

[622] Meyer, Christopher, *DC Confidential* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005), p.227.
[623] Meyer, pp. 254-262.
[624] Meyer, p.284.
[625] Knightley, Phillip, *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-maker from the Crimea to Iraq* (London: Andre Deutsch, 2004), pp.489-90. When the deadline passed with no action from Saddam Hussein U.S. and Coalition aircraft began their attacks on Iraq.

another 15 members who preferred to remain anonymous.[626] In addition, compared to the 35-member Coalition of 1991 against Iraq which had Arab members and the fiat of a UNSCR for military action against Iraq, in 2003 there were no formal Arab military contributions.[627] Here then in the two case studies set out here are the points of similarity – regime change without the international approval given by a UNSCR – in addition to military action against Iraq in 2003 being hotly disputed throughout the UK, in the media and in Parliament where 139 Labour MPs rebelled against the government motion for military action.[628] As experienced war reporter Jon Swain remarked in January 2003, just before the actual fighting broke out, this was the first time since the invasion in Suez in 1956 that a British government had sent British troops into combat without popular support at home.[629]

It is interesting that Blair, in the House, gave an ambiguous statement to qualify the support he had had from the public. He said: "To date I have received nearly 30,000 letters and cards about the subject of Iraq. Given the volume of correspondence I receive, over one million letters in the last year covering a broad spectrum of issues, my office records the numbers of letters received on a subject rather than by the view expressed. However, I know that many people have written to me expressing concerns about action against Iraq and I reiterate what I have said that no decision has been made to take military action and military action is not inevitable. My office works hard to ensure that all the letters receive appropriate responses."[630] There is, in this statement, no qualification about support for government policy, only the numbers of letters received.

Blair, not being able to quantify the public support he was receiving and lacking that vital agenda-building UNSCR that he wanted was still committed to action with the USA. General Sir Michael Jackson, the UK's Chief of the General Staff (CGS) in 2003, wrote in his memoirs that Blair needed the UNSCR "possibly for internal

[626] Moorcraft & Taylor, p.182.
[627] Ibid, p.182.
[628] Kampfner, p.309.
[629] Swain, Jon, 'Close-up: Iraq', *British Journalism Review* (Vol. 14, No. 1, 2003), p.25.
[630] Hansard, House of Commons Debate, 15 January 2003, c676.

political reasons as much as for anything else."[631] Jackson, one of the intellectual soldiers of our generation, despite his rough, plain-speaking image and nickname of "The Prince of Darkness", examined previous UNSCRs himself and concluded that Blair was entitled to authorise military action against Saddam Hussein since he (Saddam) had not complied with the terms of the ceasefire halting the 1991 conflict (in being open about ridding himself of WMDs). Therefore, says Jackson, it is entirely possible to regard the two Gulf Wars "as being a single war with two ground actions separated by a long operational phase."[632] One may regard this as a valid point of view, or mere semantics, but Jackson, who later stated that the political reasons for action against Saddam have proved to be flawed, had highlighted a valid point on agenda building – the necessity of an additional UNSCR for "internal political reasons" as Tony Blair's Director of Communications at the time, Alastair Campbell, reflected in his diary, making the point that the UK, unlike the USA, was not a "superpower" and ideally required the legitimacy conferred by a UNSCR to build a supportive domestic agenda, both for the population and to win majority media support.[633]

Alastair Campbell adds, in the second part of his diary, that Blair needed the legitimacy of a new UNSCR in order to mobilise Arab opinion.[634] However, as well as this international legitimacy, Blair needed to gain domestic support once military action started, and the embedded reporter system was key to winning and retaining that support once the actual conflict had commenced, a conflict perhaps the most controversial UK military intervention since the 1956 Suez Crisis.[635] The embedded reporter system built on the support Blair already had won through backing from newspaper proprietors Rupert Murdoch and Conrad Black, with the majority of newspapers supporting military intervention.[636] Blair also went on a round of

[631] Jackson, General Sir Michael, *Soldier: The Autobiography* (London: Transworld Publishers, 2007), p.328.
[632] Ibid, p.329.
[633] Campbell, p,635.
[634] Campbell, *Countdown to Iraq*, p.439.
[635] Moorcraft & Taylor, p.183.
[636] Greenslade, p.661. Greenslade reflects that the *Mirror's* criticism of Blair going to war with Iraq in 2003 lost the newspaper readers, on the grounds that its readers did not "revel in criticism of a

television and radio interviews (he was much happier and more skilled in media presentation than Eden), including an ITN discussion when he faced a group of voters sceptical of the need for force and an hour-long show on MTV when he discussed the need for military action with a group of young people from Europe and the Middle East.[637] It is worth comparing this with Eden's media approach to radio and television which he outlined in the House of Commons. Labour M.P Willie Hamilton asked Prime Minister how many broadcasts he had made in his official capacity in previous three months; how many such broadcasts have been made by other Cabinet Ministers in the same period; and what were the subjects covered by such talks.[638]

The Prime Minister (Eden) replied: "Apart from news interviews, I have made one broadcast on the Suez Canal situation. My right hon. and learned friend the Foreign Secretary has also made one on the same subject and one on the occasion of United Nations Day. He has also taken part in a discussion programme."[639]

In his autobiography Blair comments that his involvement in Iraq was not the same as Suez where in 1956 Britain and France, against America's wishes, sought to topple Nasser and failed.[640] He was right about America's wishes but it is suggested that both had the commonality of taking military action for regime change and being without the international legitimacy of a UNSCR.

In the lead-up to the actual outbreak of military action Blair used other methods to strengthen his political agenda and justify military action. These included the setting

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government in times of conflict", exactly the same situation that the *Mirror* faced in Suez 1956. Also (Greenslade p.271) the *Sun*, with its normal "jingoistic" stance offered Tony Blair its full support, increasing its sales while the *Mirror's* circulation dropped below two million for the first time in seventy years.

[637] Stanyer, James, 'Politics and the Media: A Crisis of Trust', *Parliamentary Affairs* (Vol. 57 No. 2 date), p.421. Six daily papers supported the need for invasion –*The Times, Sun, Daily Telegraph, Express, Daily Mail* and *Star* – a combined circulation of 9.4 million. Opposing military action were the *Mirror, Guardian* and *Independent* with a combined circulation of 2.7 million.

[638] *HC Deb 25 October 1956 vol 558 cc826-7*

[639] Ibid.

[640] Blair, Tony, *A Journey* (London: Arrow, 2011) p.391.

up of a unit nominally in his No. 10 office but physically situated in a basement in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the other side of Downing Street.[641] This unit, the Coalition Information Centre (CIC), headed by Blair's Director of Communications Alastair Campbell, researched any material which could discredit Saddam Hussein and produced articles which could be published in the media. This was a similar unit to the IRD, trying to do exactly the same job of discrediting Nasser in 1956. The CIC articles could be placed in the realm of "white" propaganda by some commentators although they were all factual and truthful. However, one could more accurately use Entman's definition of this as "mediated public diplomacy" in that this technique uses mass communication (including the internet) to increase support of a country's specific foreign policies among audiences beyond that country's borders.[642] For example one article written demonstrated Saddam's (a Sunni Muslim) persecution of Shiite clerics and his murder of prominent mullahs. This was distributed through another government organisation to be published in Islamic countries in order to try to weaken Saddam's credibility.[643]

To ensure uniformity and to co-ordinate US and UK media agenda-building strategy, CIC conference calls were made every day at 10am UK time, linking No.10 with the White House, State Department, Department of Defense and other elements of the US administration plus the briefing centres in the Middle East.[644] In the UK the Ministry of Defence (MoD) responsibility for co-ordinating media within the UK fell under Lt.Col. Angus Taverner, the director of news media operations policy, whose remit was to co-ordinate the military and civilian press functions within the MoD.[645] More than 100 media reservists were called up with secondary

[641] The author was seconded from the Home Office to join that team as a researcher and writer of articles.
[642] Entman, Robert M., 'Theorizing Mediated Public Diplomacy: The U.S. case', *The International Journal of Press/Politics* (Vol. 13, No. 2, 2008), p.88.
[643] The author of this study's own recollections, and the article in question, as a member of the CIC.
[644] Author's recollection but also in Tumber, Howard & Palmer, Jerry, *Media at War: The Iraq Crisis* (London: Sage Publications, 2004), p.64.
[645] Ibid, and also J.T. Campbell interview with Lt.Col Taverner 22nd May 2008.

roles to act as media operators when needed.[646] A number of these were members of the Media Operations Group (V), Territorial Army media specialists whose civilian jobs were in newspapers, radio, television or public relations. The original strategy of forming that group was that they knew and understood the journalistic trade and could, it was hoped, for links with the media covering the build-up to the actual conflict. This was not a group in existence during the Suez 1956 conflict. For Blair, and the whole UK government media agenda building machine, anything that could give them an edge and win media and public support was justified. Tulloch writes that the *Daily Mirror* had opposed both the Suez and the Iraq 2003 conflicts and had helped to mobilise popular opposition to the war, including large-scale public demonstrations and both Swain and Tulloch in their essays are exposing the need for the Blair government to win greater media and popular support.[647] Tulloch points out that from January 1, 2003 until 20 March, 2003, in the run up to the invasion of Iraq, the *Mirror* devoted 20 front pages in their entirety out of a total of 68 to the issue with a further 26 in part devoted to Iraq.[648]

Alastair Campbell refers to the *Mirror's* opposition in his diary entry for January 31st, 2003, when he wrote that a poll in the *Mirror* said 2 per cent felt the war on Iraq would make the world a safer place.[649] He passed this news on to the White House just to show President Bush "so that he knew we were up against it" and also noted that Tony Blair had slept badly that night feeling that there had to be a second UNSCR to legitimise any military action, in contrast to President Bush who felt that the invasion could go ahead without this legitimisation.[650] Campbell notes that he had to let the White House know that with this newspaper opposition and public lack of support "our balls were in a vice."[651] He also recollected that Blair felt that without the fiat of the UN, media pictures of Iraqis carrying "dead babies out of

[646] Tumber & Palmer, p.65
[647] Tulloch, John, 'The *Daily Mirror* and the invasions of Egypt (1956) and Iraq (2003)', *Journalism Studies* (Vol. 8, No. 1, 2007), p.45.
[648] Tulloch, p.48.
[649] Campbell, Alastair, *Countdown to Iraq,* p.440.
[650] Campbell, Alastair, *The Blair Years* (London: Arrow Books, 2007), p.660.
[651] Ibid.

bombed buildings" would put the British government in real trouble.[652] Former Cabinet Minister and Labour Party strategic media planner Peter Mandelson comments that previously in 2002, Blair had persuaded President Bush to work through the United Nations to build up diplomatic pressure against Iraq to disarm but if diplomacy failed then the case for military action would be harder to make than that against Afghanistan after the terrorist attacks on America.[653] Jonathan Powell, arguing for diplomacy, wrote that "to turn Karl Von Clausewitz's dictum on its head, diplomacy is nothing but a continuation of war by other means" adding that the Blair government had spent most of its time in government not fighting wars but trying to prevent them, citing diplomatic initiatives to stop or prevent military violence in Northern Ireland, India and Pakistan but particularly in the Middle East.[654] There was no diplomatic breakthrough and no UNSCR and both Bush and Blair prepared for military action and sought support for it.

In the lead-up to the actual fighting, the UK government did not neglect to use on-line news, not only from the websites of No.10, the Cabinet Office and the MoD, but also through press releases to try to influence favourable coverage on media websites, not only reaching domestic audiences but those abroad since there were only four countries in the Coalition and the UN Security Council had not voted for military action.[655] Best *et al*, in their examination of on-line news during the conflict with Iraq, point out that for the BBC news websites, more than 50 per cent of the on-line traffic originated from outside the United Kingdom.[656] Any UK government media agenda-building policy would have to keep this in mind bearing the lack of domestic and international support for military action.

Also, the Cabinet Office had a 24-hour Media Monitoring Unit (MMU) which constantly reviewed what was published in newspapers, radio and TV. When

[652] Ibid, p.661.
[653] Mandelson, Peter, *The Third Man* (London: Harper Press) p.353.
[654] Powell, p.277.
[655] Kampfner, p.306.
[656] Best, Samuel J., Chmielewski, Brian & Krueger, Brian S., 'Selective Exposure to Online Foreign News During the Conflict with Iraq', *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* (Vol. 10, No. 4, 2005), p.54.

adverse coverage of UK political actions is discovered a rapid rebuttal machinery moves quickly into motion to refute any bad publicity and seek to place proactive material. All UK government departments were represented at the 0830 meetings of all Ministerial departmental media heads, or their deputies, chaired by Alastair Campbell in which adverse news coverage was discussed and a quick decision was made on what the line to attack that adverse coverage was to be and how it was to be done. For instance, if the attack was made by newspaper A, an exclusive off-the-record briefing could be given to rival newspaper B to undercut the first report. This would not be done by a press office civil servant (Civil Service rules of impartiality precluded this) but by a political appointee, usually a special adviser who was a Labour Party member. If a Minister was put up to refute any allegation, Alastair Campbell would pick the best one for the job, and not necessarily a minister from the department which was the subject of the adverse news report. It was his call, and the Secretary of State for that department could not, or would not, contest that decision since the Prime Minister Tony Blair would back his Director of Communication.[657]

Nevertheless, in the lead-up to what was to be an unpopular war the UK government had a media agenda-building advantage with surveys showing that 51 per cent of newspaper readers in Britain read a newspaper which shares their political leanings.[658] With a majority of the UK national newspapers showing support for the government's possible military action against Saddam, that did ease pressures on the government's attempts to seek positive supportive newspaper coverage. Even the *Mirror*, which opposed the war, was forced to tone down its attacks as readers turned away, according to Greenslade because "*Mirror* readers do not revel in criticism of the government in time of conflict".[659] Moreover its main competitor and rival, the *Sun*, kept up its accustomed jingoistic stance offering Tony

[657] Author's personal recollections.
[658] Best et al, p.56.
[659] Greenslade, p.661.

Blair full support, causing its circulation to rise while in contrast, the *Mirror's* dropped below two million for the first time in 70 years.[660]

5.2. The embedded reporting strategy evolution

The embedded reporter system as operated in Iraq 2003 emerged from the media's dissatisfaction with the "pool" system as operated in the 1991 Iraq War when the journalists were kept back from access to the front line, bringing accusations against the military of micro-managing battlefield news.[661] Curtis maintains that in the 1991 Iraq War both Britain and the US established a tightly-controlled "news management" system in which no journalists were allowed into Saudi Arabia without official permission. Once they were there they came under the control of the Joint Information Bureau (JIB) run by British, Saudi and American officials. The JIB was accused of issuing, under the pretext of press briefings, disinformation such as Iraqi soldiers surrendering and helicopters defecting, not to mention the Iraqis moving chemical weapons to the front line, as reported by the BBC and others.[662] Swanson touches upon this when he refers to politicians and officials becoming much more sophisticated and effective in manipulating news coverage by methods such as staging events to satisfy journalists' needs for interesting video pictures and timing statements and actions to meet news deadlines.[663] This can lead to journalists seeking to resist politicians' manipulation and asserting their own

[660] Greenslade, p.671
[661] Knightley (2004), pp.49-492.
[662] Curtis, Mark, *Web of Deceit* (London: Vintage, 2003), pp.23-24.
[663] Swanson, David L., 'Transnational Trends in Political Communication: Conventional Views and New Realities', in Esser & Pfetsch, p.51. From my own experience in Whitehall I can testify to this view except, when arranging major announcements I would look for pictorial illustration to illustrate that announcement since I knew that is what the media wanted. For example, when I was Assistant Director of the UK Government's Anti-Drugs Co-ordination Unit in 2001, when publicising the *Annual Report* I arranged a media picture opportunity with my Cabinet Office Secretary of State in front of a seven-foot high pile of bags of seized heroin and cocaine. The picture appeared in most of the UK national newspapers. I would hardly call this manipulating; it provided acceptable pictures for the media and it was factual.

independence and to the growing adversarialism between journalists and politicians.[664]

There was, from the media's point of view, a lack of live action coverage which led journalists to seek to manufacture news. Colonel David McDine, a member of the Territorial Army Public Information Officer group, was stationed at the JIB in Dhahran and touches on this subject.

"In the absence of hard news, journalists interviewed one another and on one afternoon alone three backwoods American television crews in succession filmed British public information officers fighting the verbal war – on the telephone. It was evidence, if any were needed, of the thirst of material to fill the apparently endless hectares of air and print space devoted to the conflict.[665]

The BBC's Ben Brown refers to the same lack of news in 1991 and recollected: "It was a weird war then, sitting with the troops for weeks and weeks and it was all over in 72 hours. So there wasn't a huge amount to report." Brown, who also covered the 2003 Iraq War, maintains that due to the amount of media complaints and dissatisfaction he felt that this led to the change of policy in 2003 when journalists were stationed in the frontline, embedded with units and protected by them.[666]

In 2003, both the US and British military introduced "embedded journalism" where accredited journalists travelled, slept and ate with combat units – and faced the same enemy fire.[667] It seemed a fair deal for the media proprietors and editors in that their reporters and cameramen were now in the front line and, with modern technology, could broadcast and send live material of on-going military action. Yet, as this study will contend, this government amending of the 1991 Iraq War "pool"

[664] Ibid.
[665] McDine, David, 'The view from Dhahran,' *Despatches* (London: MoD, Autumn 1991), p.21.
[666] Campbell, J.T. Interview with Ben Brown 28/09/2007.
[667] Katovsky, Bill & Carlson, Timothy, *Embedded: The Media at War in Iraq – An Oral History,* (Guildford, Conn., USA: Lyons Press, 2003), p.xi.

system, while apparently satisfying the media, actually allowed the UK government to build its own political and military agenda under the guise of a media agenda, a fact admitted by the UK Secretary of State for Defence Geoff Hoon who commented that while the viewers would be seeing more of the war than ever before they may actually be learning less.[668] Alastair Campbell, after a meeting with NATO Director if Information and Press Jamie Shea, and his deputy Mark Laity, said that it was almost impossible to lose the military battle with Iraq but perfectly feasible that we could lose the battle for hearts and minds.[669]

Therefore, on October 30, 2002, Campbell, as Blair's senior adviser, was already aiming to formulate a media plan to secure public support. Key to this was the embedded media plan and this chapter looks at this initiative in the lead up to and during the three-week 2003 Iraq War. The first section will deal with the evolution of the embedded media strategy and in the following section how this strategy worked for the media. Section 3 will examine how embedded journalism actually worked for the UK government and the next section will look at the question as to whether embedded reporters were a bonus for objective reporting or coup for government media agenda building.

There is a symbiotic relationship between the policy maker and the media, each feeding off the other, each gaining something from the bargain. Although some politicians may regard the media as parasitical (sucking from the host body politic without contributing anything in exchange) the real relationship is in the way of symbiosis, which unlike parasitism gives some benefit to both parties in the biological bargain. So, we have an arrangement here, with host (government) and symbiote (media) equally benefiting. But in a time of conflict this may not be enough since any government has to secure its home base and support its own agenda. Influencing the media is part of that agenda-building process, but as ITN's Political Editor Michael Brunson comments, 2003 made this difficult for the UK government

[668] Tumber & Palmer, p.24.
[669] Campbell, *Countdown to Iraq,* p.73.

in that they had far less control than they used to over information reaching journalists from the battlefield.[670] Advances in broadcast technology such as satellite transmission, digital photography and lightweight portable equipment put more power in the hands of the reporter while eroding official capacity to control that information and "allowing individuals to consume more information, more quickly, from more places in the world, and with less interference from censors than ever before".[671] This is not a problem Eden had in 1956.

Even before these technological advances, and reflecting on the Vietnam War, Sylvester and Huffman refer to TV eroding support for the conflict. "Nightly news film of carnage on the battlefield created a stark contrast to official military pronouncements that the United States was winning the conflict - uncensored reporting resulted in a distrust between the military and the media that continued until the embed programme began."[672] The embedded programme arose when the American and British authorities realised that with the new portable satellite equipment it would be almost impossible to enforce a blanket news ban.[673] Therefore the principle of embedded reporting became a very attractive proposition in that it *appeared* to give the media the access to front line fighting which they were denied in the 1991 Iraq conflict, but it also gave the military authorities *greater control* (my italics) since the embedded reporters relied on the military for transport, food, power (the ability to recharge electronic equipment) and protection. Knightley remarks that there had to an "appearance of open-ness and truthfulness."[674] The embedded media system appeared to fulfil this but Konstantinidou, reflecting on the media images of death in the Iraq 2003 conflict refers to the images produced by embedded reporting as "perception management", part of a government learning process stemming from the Vietnam war, the "body bag" syndrome and the desire

[670] Brunson, Michael, 'Putting ourselves beyond reproach', *British Journalism Review* (Vol. 15, No. 1, 2004), p.17.
[671] McNair, Brian, 'From Control to Chaos: Towards a New Sociology of Journalism', *Media, Culture & Society* (Vol. 25, No. 4, 2003), p.550.
[672] Sylvester, Judith & Huffman, Susan, *Reporting from the Front: the Media and the Military* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), p.5.
[673] Hamilton, John, *War in Iraq: Real-Time Reporting* (Minnesota, USA: Abdo, 2004), p.27.
[674] Knightley (2004), p.529.

by US and UK authorities to keep the visual representation of death off Western television screens.[675]

One can refer back to the 1991 Iraq War and the fierce criticism of the BBC's Jeremy Bowen's report on the deaths of civilians following a missile attack an alleged Iraqi military command bunker which was actually an air-raid shelter and contained 300 civilians.[676] Bowen was accused by a UK newspaper of "stabbing our boys in the back" for featuring the images and two diverging points emerge from this. Firstly, the UK and US authorities would try to avoid such images in 2003 and, secondly, it would be in Saddam Hussein's interests to allow in 2003, as he did in 1991, Western media access to civilian casualties – his own attempts at "perception management" and the showing of images of civilian death and grief calculated to turn the opinion of those seeing them against the military invasion of his country, as featured in the Greek media according to Konstantinidou's study.[677] The contrast here, as Nossek states, is in the message of political violence which is why media coverage is important for those behind it, both as an end in itself, and as a means to other ends.[678]

For the UK and US governments the "political violence" of civilians, especially women and children, being killed, would be counter-productive to their political aims, a similar problem faced in Suez 1956. Therefore, embedded reporting which showed only military conflict, would win more support and less opposition than showing civilian casualties. The opposite was the case for Saddam Hussein to whom the showing of civilian casualties would be more likely to win support for a cessation of hostilities, as happened on February 1991 when two laser-guided bombs smashed

[675] Konstantinidou, Christina, 'Death, lamentation and the photographic representation of the Other during the Second Iraq War in Greek newspapers', *International Journal of Cultural Studies* (Vol. 10, No.2, 2007), p.149.
[676] See footnote 673.
[677] Konstantinidou, p.150.
[678] Nossek. Hillel, 'Our News and Their News: The Role of National Identity in the Coverage of Foreign News', *Journalism* (Vol. 5, No. 3, 2004), p.349.

through the roof of a shelter, believed to be an Iraqi command post, but in fact was an air-raid shelter holding over 400 people.[679] Western reporters were ushered to the scene by Iraqi minders and given free rein to film the devastation, horribly charred remains being brought out to ambulances and angry relatives screaming in grief.[680] One can make a similar case for the Israeli/Hamas conflict in Gaza in January 2008; Hamas gains more world-wide support from "civilian" casualties inflicted by the Israeli military whereas the opposite is true for Israel which, indeed, banned foreign media from the area of fighting, it is proposed, for that very point of view.

Robert Hodierne, who covered the Vietnam War as a reporter and was the senior managing editor for *Army Times* during the 2003 conflict, said that embedded reporting was a brilliant strategy based on a more sophisticated understanding of the role that the media can play.[681] In the 1991 Iraq War the stated reason for keeping reporters out of the front line was the fear of inadvertent broadcasting of information to the enemy over 24-hour news channels, coupled in the American government's case with the spectre of the Vietnam War and the effect television reporting had on raising public opposition to the war.[682] Paul and Kim refer to the "horrible press-military breakdown" in the Vietnam War which brought trust between the two to an all-time low, forcing changes in how the USA, and other democratically-elected governments, could forge an agenda-building policy to win media support, key to reaching out for public support.[683] Cottle, in his study of media coverage of conflict, refers to the self-conception of the journalism profession as public watchdog and provider of information and resources for public opinion formation.[684] Bearing this in mind, in planning coverage of the 2003 Iraq conflict, media organisations had also to take into account the danger to their reporters, cameramen, drivers, and other supporting staff. As Katovsky and Carlson underline

[679] Moorcraft & Taylor, p.160.
[680] Ibid.
[681] Hall, Jane, p.79.
[682] Ibid.
[683] Paul & Kim, p.iii.
[684] Cottle, Simon, *Mediatized Conflict* (Maidenhead, Berks: Open University Press, 2006), p.3.

at the start of their study into the embedded reporter programme: "Statistically, journalists were ten times more likely to die than the 250,000 American and British soldiers who would be involved in the war". So, taking into account the risk to life if any organisation chose to go the "unilateral" way, that is to cover the war using their own transport, entering the front line without protection and possibly being victim to live fire from both sides, it is not surprising that many major media organisations chose to take part in the embedded reporter programme.[685]

The programme itself caught the media by surprise when on October 30th, 2002, U.S. Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld "wandered unexpectedly into a meeting of Washington bureau chiefs of the major media outlets" and told them that he regarded the best way to combat the news management of the Taliban, in Afghanistan, and the terror group Al-Qaeda was to have accurate, professional journalists on the ground to see the truth of what was going on; thus the embedded programme was apparently born.[686]

This contention is denied by Lieutenant Commander Steve Tatham, a British military briefer in the Iraq 2003 War. He said that when he joined the media planning staff for Operation *Rocky Freedom* in September 2002 the embedded programme was already well set in place although there has been disagreement between the U.S. and the UK governments over its exact structure. Tatham said: "The U.S. decided that all its media coverage was going to come from the embeds, whereas the UK said no. All the embeds are going to see are a tiny, small, subset of the operations the unit they are embedded with. So the major information plan will come from a strategic level, from Downing Street, from the press office there, from the Ministry of Defence and from three press information centres at the operational level."[687] In other words, Tatham says, there was no UK intention to use the embedded reporting system as a "distraction" but he did admit that the media became fascinated with the imagery from the front line embedded reporting,

[685] Katovsky & Carlson, p.xi.
[686] Ibid.
[687] Campbell, J.T., Interview with Lieutenant Commander Steve Tatham.

a narrow, action focussed imagery which dominated television especially, it is contended, at the cost of more strategic analysis of events.[688] Rumsfeld certainly praised it as a "historic experiment" with its initial appeal to the media of front-line reportage, a clear improvement over the pool coverage of Iraq 1991.[689] The journalists had to sign a contract with rules on what and when they can report, including restrictions on reporting details of military actions and on showing the faces of the dead and wounded.[690]

Mark Laity, a former BBC Defence Correspondent, and now spokesman at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), Mons, Belgium, refers to the embedded reporters suffering from the Stockholm syndrome, that is to say close identification with their "captors", the military unit with which they were embedded and which may have affected their objectivity. He is also critical of the original concept of just having embeds at the front and then nothing between them and the main Coalition briefing centre in Doha, in Qatar. Laity would have had embeds at brigade, division and corps levels to give greater strategic media coverage, he said in an interview.[691]

Laity, as one of the very few military "spin doctors" who has had a senior broadcasting background, praises the UK military briefing system in 1991 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as much superior to the Coalition briefings in Doha, in 2003. He reflected: "Every day (in 1991 when he was a BBC Defence correspondent) I got real meat, analytical meat. As the BBC radio pundit in residence at HQ in Riyadh for four days out of five I got real meat at the briefings where things were said, things were briefed where I could say well they've done this and this what it

[688] Stanyer, p.422. At the beginning of the military intervention TV audiences soared with the main BBC and ITV news attracting five to six million people. In addition, compared to the 1991 conflict 40& of British households had access to three or more 24 hour news channels whose viewing figures swelled, particularly when news was breaking. *Sky News* was the most watched with figures peaking at 1.23 million.
[689] Kennedy, Liam, ' Securing vision: photography and US foreign policy', *Media, Culture & Society* (Vol. 30, No. 3, 2008), p.284.
[690] Ibid.
[691] Campbell, J.T. Interview with Mark Laity.

means. In the 2003 Doha briefings there was no meat…it was bland, soporific stuff cotton wool stuff. If I had been there I would have been furious, absolutely furious."[692] Laity, as a former top rank defence correspondent refers to the main U.S. military briefer Brigadier General Vincent Brook as a "motormouth" who just set the lines and said nothing of substance.[693] It is a fascinating view from a "poacher turned gamekeeper", which is to say from a former BBC war correspondent who was now a military spokesman. Hammond also quotes criticism of the lack of detail in the Doha briefings at the expense of presentation and wrote that Coalition spokesmen held forth from a 'podium of truth' designed by Hollywood art director George Allison; Michael Wolff, of *New York* described the media centre there as the "theatre of the absurd" and articles in the *Independent* and the *Guardian* respectively referred to jargon used after a cock-up and "the way the war is being spun and reported".[694]

The embedded system created a conflict for American and British media organisations:

- accept the protection, support and special briefing of embedded status with its risks of censorship and possible loss of objectivity, or
- risk the lives of staff by going down the "unilateral" route.

Major UK and U.S. media organisations opted for embedded status, no doubt with the thought that they could still preserve journalistic integrity. Nevertheless, there was a hidden agenda here in that the military, US and UK, abandoned the policy that had been (despite some, and mainly print journalism criticism) successful in 1991 in media agenda building and adopted a policy of embedding in 2003, a policy which they had resolutely refused to implement in the first Iraq War. In their study of media/military relationships Hess and Kalb say that the embedded policy was adopted in 2003 because the war was an unpopular one, compared to 1991, and

[692] Ibid.
[693] Ibid.
[694] Hammond, p.61

that the public needed to see that information came through the media rather than official sources if public support was to be won.[695] ABC's Ted Koppel, who covered the conflict, supports this contention that the war was "seen through the eyes of the journalists".[696]

Yet, in a moment of truth Vice president Dick Cheney, US Secretary of Defense in the 1991 Iraq War, said: "I do not look on the press as an asset. Frankly I looked on it as a problem to be managed."[697] In 1956 Anthony Eden felt the same as the Suez chapter demonstrates. Cheney is regarded as one of the most powerful vice presidents ever and the "management" implicit in the 2003 embedded journalist system may have stemmed from the 1991 media handling arrangements where there was a gap between the reporters at the front with their narrow tactical view based on what one small formation of soldiers was doing and those at the press centre in Dubai who accepted the big picture strategic briefings. The former may have been too narrow and tactical in what they saw/reported and in the latter the journalists may have been too reliant solely on what they were fed by the one-star briefers who went live on TV leaving the reporters little to do themselves

In contrast to, and in apparent conflict with, his vice president, one of the prime designers of the embedded journalist programme, the U.S. Defence Department's Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Bryan Whitman, maintains that the policy was implemented to give the American people the opportunity to see their military at work and also to counter disinformation from the enemy.[698]

Yet not every journalist accepted this almost Faustian bargain. The *Independent's* Robert Fisk, who had covered the 1991 conflict, and was now reporting on the 2003 war takes issue with even the word "embedded". He asserts: "It was a sign of complacency of the press that they willingly adopted this supine word as part of

[695] Hess, Stephen & Kalb, Martin (eds), *The Media and the War on Terrorism* (Washington D.C: Brookings Press, 2003), p.12.
[696] Ibid.
[697] Sifry & Cerf, p.127.
[698] Hall, Jane, p.77.

their own vocabulary".[699] More circumspectly, the BBC's Middle East editor Jeremy Bowen, who also covered both Iraq wars, underlines the advantage of the embedded system to the military. Bowen says: "What has changed enormously, even in the years I have been in the news business, is the technology, and the fact that everyone from governments to insurgents knows that the best way to communicate with their supporters, and to win over new ones, is to get their version of what happened on to the airwaves. Winning the information war is no longer incidental: it is a top military priority".[700] The embedded reporter structure gave just that advantage to the military and this study will examine the contention that the system was deliberately employed by the UK and US military as a positive agenda building policy, not as one to give the media better access to the battlefront, the access they had been denied in the 1991 war.

Writing in 1986, Blumler and Gurevitch accepted the idea that the mass media play a pivotal part in the nexus of power relations in society but at the same time suggested that the linkages between media organisations and other power-wielding institutions are still segmented and incomplete.[701] More than 20 years has gone by since they made this academic assertion. In observing these linkages from the point of the UK political decision makers it is proposed to follow an audit trail which may, or may not, show that as far as embedded reporting was concerned, the links between the media and the UK government (as a power wielder) was not segmented, was far from incomplete and, in fact, was planned and a success for UK government media agenda building. The "audit trail" referred too should provide the answers to this dissertation's main research question:

[699] Fisk, Robert, *The Great War for Civilisation: The Conquest of the Middle East* (London: Harper Perennial, 2006), p.1152.
[700] Bowen, Jeremy, *War Stories* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2006), p.112. Also Campbell, J.T. Interview with Jeremy Bowen.
[701] Blumler, Jay G. & Gurevitch, Michael: 'Journalists' Orientation to Political Institutions: the Case for Parliamentary Broadcasting', in Golding, Peter; Murdock, Graham & Schlesinger, Philip (eds), *Communicating Politics: Mass communications and the political process* (USA: Leicester University Press, 1986), p.67.

How did the UK government plan and successfully amend its agenda-building strategy in order to win the support of the media in two conflicts - Suez 1956 and Iraq 2003?

It may be worth noting in comparison that in the early days of the democratically-elected National Socialist government in Germany in January 1933, Chancellor Adolf Hitler had yet to bring in the total command of the media and was confronted with an elaborate network of competing interests and elites (military and business mainly) whose support or cooperation was essential to maintain the impression of *voluntary* coordination in terms of press ownership and cinema and working together to support the state.[702] Kallis in his study refers to this as "remarkably orderly and consensual."[703] This could provide the template on which a UK government could work, similar to the early generative days of the Nazi government before total control of the media was enshrined in German legislation, a control the UK government could never have in 2003 not only because of the freedom of the press ethic enshrined in British life and legislation but also due to the fast expanding globalisation and technical changes in media transmission.

Globalisation has also meant that by 2002 an increasing number of Arabs were getting their news from sources outside their borders, a point not missed by British and American media policy makers who wished to influence this group and win their support. Tumber and Palmer make the point that the advent of transnational Arab language satellite broadcasters, such as *al-Jazeera*, using Western-inspired news gathering methods fundamentally changed the pattern of the media in the region.[704] Alastair Campbell recollects that in a meeting with King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia on November 1, 2002, the king said he was worried about the impact of *al-Jazeera* which was developing a real sway among the broader Muslim

[702] Kallis, Aristotle, 'Nazi Propaganda and 'Coordination': The Haphazard Path to Totalitarianism', *European Review of History* (Vol. 13, No. 1, March 2006), p.116.
[703] Ibid.
[704] Tumber & Palmer, p.130

community.[705] In 2003, unlike the 1991 Iraq War, there were no Arab troops in the Coalition forces and therefore no real political support for the invasion of Iraq from neighbouring Arab countries. In 2001, Professor Shibley Telhami, of the University of Maryland, conducted a survey with Zogby International in six Arab countries—Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates. He repeated the survey in 2003 and found in just two years, a huge increase in the use of satellite television. Egypt, for example, went from about 8 per cent to 46 per cent, and similar percentages of change were found in the other countries.[706] Hiebert makes the point that mass communicators often must work in a hurry and convey the message in the shortest possible time or space. This is where the instantaneous nature of TV came in, from embedded reporters conveying live images by satellite to not only their own countries, but to the whole world, including Arab countries which had doubts about the evidence for war.

Indeed, there is an abundance of research to show that the mainstream media have a long history of supporting the efforts of a government during war.[707] Kumar makes this allegation in support of her accusation that the Bush administration used "faulty and false" information to justify the 2003 war on Iraq, but the accusation surely applies to the UK government who supplied some of that information.

McQuail comments on the changing media conditions in 2003 relating mainly to the continuing expansion and globalisation of the media and their main forms as "news and entertainment." He cites this as creating a voracious demand for content through instant reporting from the battlefield which creates "dependencies" in terms of government news management through access to the battlefield and the offering the benefits of war coverage to chosen media.[708] This area of "dependencies" will

[705] Campbell, A., *Countdown to Iraq,* p.75.
[706] Hiebert, Ray Eldon, 'Challenges for Arab and American Public Relations and Public Diplomacy in a Global Age'. Keynote address given at an international conference *Public Relations in the Arab World in the Age of Globalisation* (University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, May 4, 2004), p.2.
[707] Kumar, Deepa, 'Media, War and Propaganda: Strategies of Information Management During the 2003 Iraq War', *Communication and Critical Cultural Studies* (Vol. 3, No. 1, March 2006), p.49.
[708] McQuail, Denis, 'On the Mediatization of War', *International Communication Gazette* (Vol. 68, No. 2, 2006), pp.114-115.

be looked at in the next section and, from analysis from personal interviews with media figures and military media planners, other published media accounts of relationships with military "minders", this dissertation will attempt to answer the question *cui bono*, for whose benefit?

5.3. How the embedded reporter strategy worked for the media

Media editors certainly saw benefit in the scheme, compared to the barred access to the front line in Iraq 1991 and on the whole accepted the new embedded system and nominated staff to embedded positions. But what did the embedded reporters themselves and other media specialists think about the system? Louis A. Day, now a media professor and himself a U.S. Army Public Information Officer with 199 Light Infantry Brigade in Vietnam, said that the disadvantage of embedded reporters from military's standpoint is that if something goes wrong "reporters are right there to report it." Nevertheless, he claims it can be a big dividend when reporters are around compared to 1991 when reporters were kept out of the front line."[709] Ed Timms was a staff writer on the *Dallas Morning News*. A very experienced journalist, having covered Iraq 1991, Balkans and Israel-Palestine conflicts, he believed the embedded reporter programme worked well, and added: "After the 1991 War, journalists had clamoured for better access to front-line units. Certainly there were attempts to manipulate the media, but journalists were able to do a much better job this time because it was cheaper than fielding so-called unilateral reporters in the region. Ideally a good mix of embedded and unilateral journalists would provide the most comprehensive coverage, but that wasn't always the practice. Embedded reporters had little opportunity to include the perspective of the Iraqis in their stories. Few of us spoke Arabic."[710]

[709] Sylvester & Huffman, p.34.
[710] Sylvester & Huffman, pp.120-121.

Philip Jacobson, veteran foreign correspondent for the *Sunday Times, Sunday Telegraph* and *Times*, notes that when the 2003 war with Iraq was likely journalists in Britain and the USA were rushed through costly "battlefield survival" courses, most run by former special forces soldiers, with SAS veterans cornering the UK market. He makes the point that he was all in favour of reducing the occupational risk with the best equipment on the market, including a £750 state-of-the-art flak jacket.[711] He quotes BBC correspondent Kate Adie, similarly protected, as saying that in a front-line situation "the search for facts was one of the minor aspects of life and survival became a priority."[712] How attractive then was a place as an embedded reporter, protected by professional soldiers while at the same time getting exclusive access to front-line stories, access not allowed in the 1991 conflict. Knightley refers to the danger of unilateral or freelance reporters in the 2003 conflict with 15 journalists reported dead, some media suspecting that they had been targeted by the American forces. "Those journalists prepared to get on side – and that means 100% on side – will become 'embeds' and receive every assistance", he contrasts.[713]

There appears to be no suspicion, on the other hand, that British forces targeted unilaterals. Yet there is an interesting view from BBC embedded reporter Tim Franks, who was stationed with an Army Field Press and Information Centre six miles north of the Iraq/Kuwait border. He said it was: "Also known as the FTU – Forward Transmission Unit, or, as our commanding officer explained to us, 'Fuck the Unilaterals'."[714] It is interesting that he refers to "our" commanding officer. It is even more interesting that the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Sean Tully used that statement. People may be all too familiar with the black humour often employed by troops; it helps to lighten the load in times of stress. Yet in this case it seems to indicate a deliberate policy to control media information flow through the

[711] Jacobson, Philip, 'Hacks dodging the flak', *British Journalism Review* (Vol. 14, No. 1, 2003),pp.30-31.
[712] Jacobson, p.33.
[713] Knightley, Phillip, 'History or bunkum?' *British Journalism Review* (Vol. 14, No. 2, 2003), p.7.
[714] Franks, Tim, 'Not war reporting – just reporting', *British Journalism Review* (Vol. 14, No. 2, 2003), p.15.

embedded reporter system – use of a technique to influence the media into supporting a political agenda.[715]

The BBC's Ben Brown was stationed at divisional level with a Forward Transmission Unit with the task of gathering material from embedded reporters with the front-line units, and transmitting the material back to London via satellite link. He admitted that the Army briefer at this level, Colonel Chris Vernon, had actually admitted that he wanted to try and use the media as a psychological weapon. "His idea was that there was an uprising in Basra and me and Christiane Ammanpour (CNN) would be choppered in by the British military with our satellite dish and we'd be broadcasting from there. Saddam would be sitting in Baghdad and would see that CNN and the BBC were in Basra, the second city, and the whole regime would implode and crumble and that would be a kind of propaganda way of winning the war, but it never quite worked out like that."[716] Again, this appears to be a deliberate attempt to use the military tool of psychological operations by involving the media, as stated in additional research question No.4.

John Donvan, who reported the war for ABC's *Nightline* as a unilateral and not an embedded reporter, is critical of the concept in that the latter trivialises war. He commented: "The only thing I have against embedding is that the news media itself falls in love with the glitz and glamour and the whiz-bang of embedded reporting and puts too much emphasis on embedding that it lets the public forget they're not seeing the war itself, but a tiny slice of the war."[717] One has then to speculate if this was actually the intention of the government media controllers who formulated the programme. John Hodierne, a Pulitzer Prize winning reporter who covered the Vietnam War, said the problem with embedded reporting was that there was no overview and he put that down to the military briefers in the rear areas who, he

[715] The full question is: How did the UK government make use of media management techniques to influence the media into supporting the government's political agenda?
[716] Campbell, J.T. Interview with Ben Brown.
[717] Hall, Jane, p.83

claims, failed in their job of keeping the media informed, a view shared by SHAPE spokesman Mark Laity.[718]

The UK had actually used embedded reporters in World War 1. Six correspondents were embedded with British forces on the Western front and produced, according to Knightley, the worst reporting of just about any war and were knighted for their services. He added: "One of them, Sir Philip Gibbs, had the honesty, when the war was over, to write that he and his colleagues identified themselves completely with the armies in the field. Their successors in Iraq 2003 "soon lost all distinction between warrior and correspondent and wrote and talked about 'we" with boring repetition," Knightley contends.[719] This points towards to a reliance on "official sources" with reporters appearing not to feel themselves manipulated, which in itself appears to be a success for the political agenda of the UK government and its media agenda-building policy.

BBC war reporter veteran Kate Adie, commenting on media/military arrangements in the 1991 conflict, pays tribute to the military personnel assigned to the media as appreciating the working principles and understanding the technical side of journalism.[720] This was not surprising as many had professional journalism experience themselves and were Territorial Army members of the Media Operations Group, originally headed and founded by a former Territorial Army colonel, Alan Protheroe, also a former Assistant Director General of the BBC. Adie wrote than in retrospect she would liked to have had more cameras up with the forward units, though this would involve the military committing transport and escort resources. This was noted by the military and the changes were made to realise Adie's aspirations through the embedded reporter system in Iraq 2003 as outlined by Earl Casey, a senior editor at CNN and involved in training and equipment issues. Casey claimed the embedded reporter programme worked better than any

[718] Hall, Jane, p.84.
[719] Knightley, p.8.
[720] International Press Institute, *Reporting the War: A collection of experiences and reflections on the Gulf* (London, 1992), p.1.

other approach and comparing it to the first Iraq War he added: “In 1991 there was no freedom of access. It was not perfect but Iraq was not conducive for unilaterals because the chance of being shot up by the U.S. was high.” He had his teams of reporters and cameramen field testing new equipment in Kuwait for weeks before the outbreak of fighting, especially the Thurya cell phone system based in Dubai and which gave good reception in the battle area.[721] The embedded reporter system in 2003, and its approval by senior media editors such as Casey, appears to partly answer the “release of information” point in that the media were up in the front line, they had up-to-date transmission facilities and had access to information denied in Iraq 1991.[722]

Chris Shaw, a senior Channel 5 news controller, says that during the three-week Iraq war around 1.5 million people became addicted to rolling war coverage with Sky News increasing its audiences by a factor of seven. At certain key moments Sky news was actually the fourth most popular channel in all British homes, something that had never happened before – a real success for embedded reporter coverage.[723] Terrestrial programmes, especially ITV and BBC went “war crazy” with huge volumes of special programming, fed again by embedded reporters and instant satellite pictures, linked to the usual studio analysis. ITN also switched its bulletin from 10pm to 9pm to get in with the latest news an hour before BBC’s 10pm programme. The key difference between Iraq 1991 and Iraq 2003 was the sheer volume of action footage which, it is suggested, left less room for studio analysis. This contention will be approached again in this dissertation’s Conclusions chapter. BBC World presenter Nik Gowing refers to this instantaneous action coverage as “the tyranny of real-time” which creates an immense political problem for the British government. Gowing, who made this statement in a lecture in May 2004, was referring to events reported post conflict in Iraq when there was much more time for

[721] Sylvester & Huffman, pp70-72.
[722] Additional research question No. 1 is: What arrangements were made by the UK government and military sources for the release of information to the media, and why were these arrangements made?
[723] Shaw, Chris, ‘TV News: why more is less’, *British Journalism Review* (Vol.14, No.2, 2003), p.58.

media analysis and reflection.[724] This was not the case, it is suggested, during the period of actual conflict when instant images from the battle front were in the forefront of news reporting.

Hilary Andersson was in Iraq 2003 for the BBC, based at British Divisional HQ in southern Iraq. She had two other female colleagues also based there for the BBC – Caroline Wyatt and Kylie Morris – and also based at the HQ were veteran conflict reporter Christiane Ammanpour (CNN), along with Cordelia Kretzschmar (GMTV) and Emma Hurd (Sky). Andersson recollects the amazement of the soldiers at the female presence: "We were, of course, immersed in the male-dominated world of war. The tens of thousands of soldiers by whom we were surrounded couldn't have been more amazed at our presence had it been the Dark Ages."[725] She refers to the "wow" factor of having them in the front line in her article and the novelty of female presence so near the battle front. That "wow" factor, seeing female reporters in flak jackets and helmets, ostensibly reporting from the front line, may have been a strong attraction to viewers but the key word here is "ostensibly". In other words the figure of a reporter, female or male, *appearing* to report from the front line, not able to see any action and relying on information from "official sources", transmitting these answers to the public via satellite link, may be in danger of unwittingly falling into a propaganda or psychological information trap, as outlined by Ben Brown.

Knightley makes the point that the main problem with the British embedded coverage was that there was so much of it. British news networks extended their budgets by a combined £22 million to cope with raised viewing figures and there were more live pictures from the battlefield than had been the case in any previous war.[726] This multitude of images obscured any real analysis of the war which had become television picture-led and deployed the best writers and reporters, regardless of their gender. Pictures showed women reporters giving live on air

[724] Gowing, Nik, Media, the Law and Peace-building: from Bosnia and Kosovo to Iraq', *The Alistair Berkley Memorial Lecture* (London: London School of Economics, May, 2004).
[725] Andersson, Hilary, 'The wow factor', *British Journalism Review* (Vol. 14, No. 2, 2003), p.20.
[726] Knightley, p.10.

reports near “the front line” but actually in a more safe position of a headquarters, created a “wow” factor, mentioned earlier in this chapter by BBC reporter Hilary Andersson. “That’s why women and war make good television”, she said.[727] Andersson adds that women added a breadth to war reporting, perhaps by reporting the human side more fully, but she is frank when she says that there are many men who report with enormous depth and adds that the best argument for woman reporting is that it massively expands the pool of available talent.

The deployment of embedded women reporters certainly added to the variety and attractiveness of TV coverage, but it could also be seen to be advantageous to the military and politicians. The reports from female reporters were not from the front line, as Andersson admits, and the material they broadcast – picture opportunities, interviewees – were provided by the military and naturally weighted in their favour without appearing to be so and could be construed as propaganda or psyops ploys.

Caroline Wyatt, like her BBC colleague Ben Brown, was based at an FTU, or “hub” with the job of receiving reports from the front line embeds, processing them and transmitting them to London, adding her own live on camera assessments. “They would be doing the micro stuff, in theory, and we would be adding the briefing that we had. In theory this should make sense of what was happening,” she said. “In practice, it was very hard to make sense of what was happening from where we were because in terms of the people who were commanding the war, leading the war, they were not based in our camp.”[728]

Andersson admits, despite her flak-jacketed and helmeted presence and reports to camera, all was not what it seemed:

“If you dig beneath the surface of Gulf War II, beneath the fact that every time you turned on your television a woman was on screen, you will discover that we were

[727] Andersson, p.22.
[728] Campbell, J.T. Interview with Caroline Wyatt.

not actually at the front line. We were visible all right, but that was because we were far enough to the rear of the action to be able to use a satellite dish safely without endangering large numbers of troops by attracting incoming fire. In fact on the real front line, military embed positions were entirely dominated by men."[729]

Wyatt admitted that she was not getting enough briefings from the general at her location, a point reinforced by Ben Brown. Both are honest enough to admit that the generals had a war to fight and could appreciate the real situation. She reflected: "We were sitting in the middle of a very sandy camp with some very nice people but we weren't really at headquarters."[730]

Wyatt and Andersson's BBC radio colleague Tim Franks was in a more front-line position, based at a Forward Transmission Unit (FTU) supposed to provide a view of the broad sweep of British military operations across southern Iraq. He would receive material from the actual front-line embedded journalists, known as "rushes" in the business and add to it briefings he received from the military and material he would gather himself from Army organised facility trips. Franks makes it quite clear that the FTU commanding officer, Lt. Col Sean Tully wanted the journalists to be part of their "information operations", that is to help the military deliver "a particular message to particular audiences", both in the UK and Iraq. Franks adds: "We were in Tully's words 'a tool, a weapon, and a battle-winning asset'"[731] In addition, a senior officer, who did not wish his name used, told Franks: "We are in the business of news management. We are not interested in the anti-war view". This "management" concentrated on British journalists; French and German broadcasters who asked for embedded status and "were told to go to hang", according to Franks.[732] Again the evidence here from Franks points to the UK

[729] Andersson, p.21.
[730] Campbell, J.T., Wyatt interview. In military terms the "hub" reporters like Wyatt, Brown and Andersson were at "echelon", the administrative area to the rear of the actual operational divisional HQ. It was the wrong place to be since it gave no access to the divisional commander whose HQ was nearer the front line.
[731] Franks, p.16.
[732] Franks, p.16.

government making use of propaganda techniques through selective management of news.

Franks said the embedded system worked for him although he tried to keep up normal journalistic objective standards and distance himself from the military, particularly difficult when living check by jowl with soldiers and relying on them for everything to sustain life, including protection. Franks here is expressing his thoughts on possible military manipulation affecting journalistic objectivity as outlined in my supplementary research question No. 3. At the FTU journalists were given privileged access to information but Franks notes that it was "information which had always to be treated sceptically.[733]

However, to be fair to Lt.Col. Tully, Caroline Wyatt takes a more sympathetic view when the news did come that Allied troops had entered Basra. By then the military could receive BBC TV at their camp and Wyatt did a live broadcast in which she confirmed the news about Basra. "Sean came up to me after the live broadcast very upset that I had not used the words 'Basra had been liberated.' I felt that it was my job to remain impartial in the use of words. Yet I could see his criticism was from the heart and that he was genuinely upset." Wyatt said she had fallen into military speak on occasions and in one live broadcast she referred to 'the RAF taking out targets' which led to an article in the *Independent* criticising her for not referring to civilians being killed. "I should not have said that. If civilians are killed you should report that," she added in retrospect.[734]

Caroline Wyatt admits that as an embedded reporter she was in the wrong place. "I can see that they did not want us sleeping near to the general but where we were they did keep us at arm's length," she added. "People were extremely pleasant, very helpful. We did get daily briefings, some of which were more informative than others. Some of them would turn out to be utterly, absolutely wrong and where

[733] Franks, p.17.
[734] Campbell. Wyatt interview.

those failures of communication came from I don't know. There was one day we reported that 80 Iraqi tanks had been seen breaking out of Basra; about two hours later it was down to one Iraqi tank. It was a failure of communication somewhere along the line."[735] She described Col. Chris Vernon as "an incredibly nice chap" but by the time she was briefed she said the information was probably third or fourth hand and that it was difficult to get the full picture.[736]

Yet there were good relationships between military and media which extended beyond professional and into comradely. On a professional and trust level, the BBC's Adam Mynott explains how he was taken into confidence on attack plans, a confidence which can, and must for fear of endangering troops, put some inhibitions on the reporter: "The commander of the 15th MEU (Marine Expeditionary Unit) had opted for a policy of total disclosure to the journalists embedded with his troops. The conditions he placed on reporters were straightforward: we were to report only events that had happened, not what was planned. Days before the attack took place I had a clear idea of how the 'war plan' should enfold."[737]

On a comradely level, almost as one of the soldiers himself, the BBC's Ben Brown spelled out the conflict between getting close to the troops and journalistic objectivity:

"Normally I feel rather revolted if I see bodies on a battlefield; I flinch from looking at them too closely. They are the ultimate reminders of the naked brutality of war, which most of our audience, including our politicians, never get to see because they're usually too horrific to broadcast. But on this occasion I caught myself experiencing a nasty sense of triumph. The man who wanted me dead, was now

[735] Campbell. Wyatt interview.
[736] Ibid.
[737] Mynott, Adam, 'Mynott, Adam, 'Umm Qasr – assault on the port town'. In Beck, Sara & Downing, Malcolm (eds), *The Battle for Iraq: BBC News Correspondents on the War against Saddam and a New World Agenda* (BBC Worldwide, 2003), p.7.

dead instead. And as the old saying goes, there's nothing more exhilarating than being shot at without result."[738]

Similarly, *Asahi Shimbun* correspondent Tsuyoshi Nojima embedded with the U.S 1st Marine Expeditionary Force noted: "I have repeatedly asked myself whether I can keep a neutral attitude because I sleep with [U.S.] soldiers every night and I am always guarded by them….yesterday, when a bomb hit Iraq troops, I unconsciously shouted 'Great'."[739]

Hamilton asserts, that embedded reporters bonded with the troops and "many reported that they were uncomfortable portraying their comrades in an unfavourable light."[740] Who benefited? It was surely the military who saw their troops portrayed in a mainly favourable light and at the same time the TV viewing figures shot up in both the UK and the USA, "a brilliant public relations move, according to Hamilton.[741] The BBC's Caroline Wyatt felt that embedded reporters had accepted the restrictions in exchange for protection and improved access to briefings, but that towards the end of the military campaign the restrictions were too inflexible; embedded reporters were not allowed to move around and the unilateral journalists, such as Sky, were welcomed when they turned up at a British unit location.

BBC Special correspondent Gavin Hewitt was embedded with the 3rd U.S. Army Infantry Division. He says they treated him cautiously at first but they gradually accepted him. Yet, at the same time, he made it clear that "if something happened and it did not reflect well on them, I would have to report it, and they regarded that as a fair deal."[742] Yet Hewitt brings up the worrying point about new technology and said: "Some enables the battlefield to come into the front room, but all the material needs interpreting. It requires correspondents who are prepared to report

[738] Brown, Ben, ''Basra – The second city falls' in Beck & Downing, p.29. Also Campbell/Brown interview.
[739] Hess & Kalb, pp.12-13.
[740] Hamilton, p.33.
[741] Hamilton, p.30.
[742] Katovsky, Bill & Carlson, Timothy, *Embedded: The Media at War in Iraq – An Oral History,* (Guildford, Conn., USA: Lyons Press, 2003), p.313.

independently and to report what they see. Technology does a lot. But ultimately you've got to have people who are faithful to what they see out there."[743]

This is a key point: the instant images went back from the embedded journalist to producers and commentators behind the front line or at a studio back in the UK. The Cardiff School of Journalism Report on Embedded Journalists says: "Our analysis indicates that embeds provided more coverage from the region than any other kind of reporter on location. This seems to have been largely at the expense of reporters based at the main military briefing centres, who enjoyed less coverage than in previous conflicts".[744] This is verified by both Ben Brown and Caroline Wyatt who both complain about the lack of briefing and in being at the administrative headquarters of a division rather than the operational HQ.

Robertson, in his examination of Scottish newspapers' coverage of the Iraq 2003 War, concluded that *The Scotsman/Scotsman on Sunday* relied on government information to the extent that they failed to give attention to the kind of evidence (civilian deaths and injuries, public health and environmental damage) which would fundamentally undermine UK foreign policy. He queried whether this failure was evidence of the hegemonic power of elites over self-censoring journalists.[745] Both the Cardiff School of Journalism report and Robertson's analysis point out to a restriction of information which could be due to several reasons:

- Embedded reporters' material was from the front line and often featured live action, particularly exciting to television, but was restricted in its strategic view (Cardiff University report)

[743] Katovsky & Carlson, p.315.
[744] Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, Too Close for Comfort? The Role of embedded reporting during the 2003 Iraq War: Summary report (Cardiff University, 2004), p.11.
[745] Robertson, John W., 'People's Watchdogs or Government Poodles? Scotland's National Broadsheets and the Second Iraq War,' *European Journal of Communication* (Vol. 19, Issue 4, 2004), p.479.

- Editors may have found this more attractive than material from briefings at the main military briefing centres, well away from the military action (Cardiff University report)
- Briefings were held at administrative headquarters and not at operational level (according to BBC's Ben Brown and Caroline Wyatt)
- UK editors were reluctant to report civilian deaths and damage which could undermine the war effort (Robertson)

5.4. How the embedded reporter strategy worked for the authorities.

Mark Laity, a BBC journalist in 1991, was happy with the UK military briefing system in place then. As a military spokesman in 2003, having switched roles, he is quite honest about the advantage of the embedded system to the military and political machine.

"*Let's be brutally frank about it, if you put a reporter with the average British or even American soldier for any length of time they will end up sympathising with them. So from a government point of view, embedded reporting will promote a greater deal of sympathy/understanding provided that you deserve it, if you have faith in your cause and your soldiers. One of the great besetting sins of modern journalism is the prejudice with which they approach most things. Journalism is a rag bag of prejudices masquerading as objectivity. Journalists think they are incredibly objective when in fact what they are doing is defining their objectivity as opinion. One of the most common features in modern journalism is the way in which they distort the language and say what we are interested in is what the public is interested in without properly analysing why people are interested in it. Bad news is more important than good news, so in any conflict situation a journalist will go into it with a ragbag of various prejudices. Embedded reporting challenges this and put*

them in a very different situation and it is more beneficial to the soldier and to the cause".[746]

In other words Laity is critical of the prejudices and lack of objectivity of his former colleagues in the media which, he says were "corrected" by the embedded system. Bryan Whitman, deputy assistant director for media operations, U.S. Department of Defense, on the other hand, was not comfortable in making comparisons with 1991 and concentrates on the technical side of reporting in both conflicts. "I always tell people that it isn't useful to compare conflicts in some respects, because the situations are so different. If you look at the advances that have been made in the news business since 1991, we couldn't have done this (embedding) in '91. The news media didn't have the capability to be able to file from the field in real time. You had to get back to where there was bigger, more stationary type of equipment to move video. You didn't have computers that were small and rugged enough and durable enough and with the transmission capabilities to be able to send copy."[747]

Yet, despite the technology difference one photographer, Joseph Giordano, of the American publication *Stars and Stripes* was quite blunt on his assessment.
He believed the embedded programme worked in many different ways. "I think the military got exactly what they wanted from the embed program – mostly positive, admiring stories about the military. Regardless of what any embedded reporter says, it was impossible not to lose some of your objectivity. These were the men and women who were feeding you, protecting you and befriending you. It wasn't anything sinister – you were a welcome newcomer to the troops and my role was to tell their stories."[748]

Whitman has explained above, from the official side, why embedded reporting was a possibility in 2003. Giordano, as a journalist, admits that the system did work due to the relationship built up between military and media. Yet that military media

[746] Campbell, J.T., Interview with Mark Laity 14 Aug, 2007.
[747] Sylvester & Huffman, p.44.
[748] Sylvester & Huffman, p.112.

relationship, with each getting something out of it, would not have worked if trust did not exist between those media who were embedded and the military with whom they lived and worked. Hooper, with his experience within the military makes the point: "We live in a free society, with a free press. It is the journalist's right to ask questions: he accepts he has no divine right to receive an answer". Explanation prevents speculation: explanation guarantees understanding."[749] This is true and explains that the build-up of trust between journalist and source is so very important for a firm working relationship. A military or political press officer can give a journalist a thousand factual answers to queries and preserve that trust. However, give one incorrect answer, or even worse, give a lie, then that trust is gone forever and, what's more, that smear soon spreads throughout the journalistic grapevine.

This trust may make the embedded journalist scheme work more for the military than for the media since the live action material sent back from the front line was motivating the professional skills of the journalist, exciting the creativity of the editors, attracting greater attention of the viewers, and satisfying the profit margins of the owners. Hooper points to the mistakes of the Vietnam War in terms of military/media relationships in that the military bureaucracy failed to realise the importance of providing the media with facilities to follow the military situation and their regarding of the press as a necessary evil. Here, too, journalists were whisked into the battle area and then whisked out again with their material and many had no conception of what war was really like. The bond was never made between military and media as it was in the embedded programme. [750] Paul and Kim refer to the potential for conflict arising from the different missions of the press and the military, the contrast between the press's interest in gaining access to information so that it can inform the public, and the military's need to secure operational and informational security.[751] Yet the embedded system, in the words of embedded media themselves, blurred the differences in these conflicting missions, with media identifying themselves with military (and therefore political) objectives, perhaps

[749] Hooper, p.110.
[750] Hooper, p.113.
[751] Paul & Kim, p.xiv.

unconsciously losing their journalistic objectivity and being influenced into unwittingly supporting a propaganda ploy, albeit a propaganda of a white or grey nature rather than black.

Bruce Conover, Senior International Editor CNN, later commented: "There is a danger of losing one's objectivity." CNN editors consistently warned their reporters to use the word *they* rather than *we* in reports referring to military activity, especially in live news reports, when they were under the most stress.[752] He also refers to the limitations and "view down a narrow hallway". Reporters were unable to lag behind and "establish what actually happened in many situations." But he refers to misunderstandings where many of the officers he had spoken to believe that the embedded journalist will function as a kind of public relations officer for the brave men who are fulfilling their duty.[753] The BBC's Caroline Wyatt and Ben Brown have already referred to this tendency as have other journalists in the previous chapter.

In addition there was a complete reliance on the military for help. Cheryl Diaz Meyer, photographer for the *Dallas Morning News*, Texas, refers to digital photography being dependent on the power from military vehicles to charge up satellite phones and computer.[754] However the danger here was that the military vehicles carrying journalists could then develop flat batteries and the vehicle would be stuck in an emergency. Despite this a close working rapport was developed. [755] Meyer added ""People ask me 'Can you be objective?' No, I'm not objective – not when you're nearly killed with these people. You know what they're going through. You know exactly how they feel because you feel it.[756]

[752] Sylvester and Huffman, p.68. Giordano also agreed with the analogy that each embedded reporter was essentially viewing the war through a straw, seeing only what their own unit was doing. However, he was working for a military newspaper.
[753] Ibid, p.69.
[754] Note: This was not a problem for the BBC's Caroline Wyatt who had her own vehicle complete with a generator to power the satellite link (Campbell/Wyatt interview).
[755] Sylvester & Huffman, pp. 92-93.
[756] Ibid.

Sarah Dodd, a CBS affiliate reporter, raised another flaw in the embedded system: its narrow focus. She did feel very much part of the unit and was "well informed" about everything the unit (4th Division Apache Helicopter Unit) did, but found the lack of awareness of what was going on in other parts of the country very frustrating - "It was like living in a vacuum." With no TV access she depended on short wave that picked up BBC World Service. However she felt that the embeds were a definite success with lots of positive relationships built up between the media and the military.[757]

Dodd, as an American, refers to turning to the BBC for the broad picture and she was not alone in this. Christian Christensen, also American and whose research work at Istanbul's Bahcesehir University includes international news coverage, refers to "a significant number of Americans turning to British news sources – such as the *Guardian* and the *BBC* – for information regarding the conflict- and adds that during the conflict about 40% of the *Guardian's* online readers were located in the United States and the BBC website had a similar boost.[758] Christiansen cites media critics as being unhappy with the "highly commercialised and nationalistic nature of the U.S. media" but also with "an uncomfortably close relationship between the press and the military which made it impossible for the average citizen to get "objective or unbiased information". Aufderheide refers to this as "therapeutic patriotism" and a "response squarely within American ideological traditions.[759] Wall and Bicket, in their examination of the attacks by U.S conservatives on the BBC post 9/11, reveal that this "patriotic" line was aimed at undermining the objective BBC coverage being increasingly tapped in to through *BBC World* and *BBC Online* by Americans eager to get a more objective news coverage than that provided by

[757] Ibid. p.126.
[758] Christensen, Christian, 'For many, British is better', *British Journalism Review* (Vol. 15, No. 3, 2004), p.23.
[759] Aufderheide, Pat, 'All-too-reality TV: challenges for television journalists after September 11', *Journalism* (Vol. 3, No. 1, 2002), pp. 7-14. Although this article was written with reference to American TV coverage after September 11, it may equally apply to some of the coverage of the Iraq 2003 conflict, as will be touched upon in this chapter.

Fox and the like. Conservative sources in the USA called the BBC the "Baghdad Broadcasting Corporation".[760]

This approach, indeed, is a condemnation of a section of the American media in Iraq 2003, one that the UK media seems to have escaped on the whole.[761] Christiansen refers to Fox News as tarring CNN and other U.S. outlets with a broad "ugly American" brush through its subjective and unapologetic nationalism and its reflection of what is wrong with American foreign policy – an excessive focus on U.S interests above other interests.[762]

Historically, the BBC has taken this objective stance and has resisted UK government pressure to bow to government propaganda pressure in time of conflicts with doubtful justification, such as has been pointed out in Chapter 4 (Suez 1956). For example, in referring a Parliamentary Review Committee on Overseas Representation 1968-69, the then Director of Public Affairs for the BBC, Kenneth Lamb noted: "As an instrument of communication the BBC has the decisive advantage that it has a world-wide reputation for telling the truth. Its overseas broadcast bulletins are therefore widely believed to give true and objective accounts of world events and they provide a sure basis for influential comment."[763] However, harking back to Suez 1956 and the previous chapter it is clear that Sir Anthony Eden did not want this "objective" reporting of the BBC but instead wanted a compliant and "patriotic" BBC to support the government agenda and intended to go as far as censoring it, "bringing it to heel" as Kyle puts it.[764]

As with Suez 1956, the Blair government complained about the BBC coverage of the Iraq 2003 war as Alastair Campbell notes in his diary when he says: "I wrote letters of complaint to [Richard] Sambrook [director of news] on various issues re

[760] Wall, Melissa & Bicket, Douglas, 'The "Baghdad Broadcasting Corporation"', *Journalism* (Vol. 9, No. 2, 2008), p.125.
[761] Christiansen, p.23.
[762] Christiansen, p.24.
[763] Lamb, Kenneth, 'Disclosure, Discretion and Dissemblement: Broadcasting and the National Interest in the Perspective of a Publicly-owned Media', in Franck & Weisband, p.235.
[764] Kyle, p.191.

[John] Humphrys, [Andrew] Gilligan and Rageh Omaar [BBC journalists] on the nature of their coverage."[765] It should be noted that none of these were embedded reporters but were filing analytical pieces, in the case of Gilligan and Omaar, from Baghdad where they broadcast on Iraqi civilian casualties, gathering the same complaints that BBC reporter Jeremy Bowen had when reporting civilian casualties in Baghdad in the 1991 Iraq war.[766]

Peter Mandelson is critical of the pressure Alastair Campbell tried to put on the BBC over a document on WMD which, the BBC *Today* programme's reporter Andrew Gilligan said had been "sexed up" to strengthen the argument for war and attributed this to Campbell.[767] Campbell wrote to the BBC's Head of News Richard Sambrook who replied that if the story proved to be false there would be a BBC apology, but he broadly defended the *Today* programme as reasonable and accurate reporting of what Gilligan's source had told him. Campbell chose, against Mandelson's advice, to appear on Channel 4 News and attack the *Today* story as "a fundamental attack on the integrity of the government, the Prime Minister and the intelligence agencies."[768] This application of pressure on the BBC bears comparison with Eden's attempts to bring it into line and support the government in the Suez Crisis but, in time of conflict Campbell won support from members of his own party, such as Dennis Skinner, but also from Tory MP Nicholas Soames who said the BBC was "out of control," adding "do you think my grandfather [Winston Churchill] had a spin doctor? Course he fucking did."[769] However, the problem with "spin doctors is that if they become the story then there is a danger that the government's agenda building will be affected. Jonathan Powell refers to Alastair Campbell's "war with the BBC" and reflects that once spin and the spin doctor become the story then the agenda-building battle is lost.[770] However, in the main

[765] Camp[bell, A., *Countdown to Iraq*, p.512.
[766] See footnote 657.
[767] Mandelson, p.361.
[768] Mandelson, pp.361-362.
[769] Campbell, *The Burden of Power,* pp.621-623.
[770] Powell, p.203.

while the fighting was still going on the embedded reporting system maintained UK public support and the BBC's credibility with the public was maintained.

The Cardiff University's Summary Report on Iraq 2003 embedded reporting quotes a survey which gave 93 per cent support for impartiality within broadcasting in time of war, adding that the most trusted source of information was the BBC (47 per cent) compared to the tabloids (7 per cent).[771] Tumber & Palmer cite BBC objectivity during the 2003 Iraq War attracting government criticism but also that poll evidence suggested that the public placed high value on such objectivity, even under wartime conditions.[772] Chapman says that the BBC's close structural ties with, yet semi independence from government, gave the BBC a unique air of authority and integrity which distanced it from a partisan popular press.[773] American academics Jowett & O'Donnell, in their study of propaganda methods in wartime, also refer to dispassionate, objective and factual reporting of the BBC.[774] So, if Americans were turning to UK sources for a more objective view on the Iraq war; what does that say about the comparative quality of UK media reporting of Iraq 2003?

Christiansen points to the American media's lack of objectivity in quoting CBS news anchor Dan Rather who, when asked about the relationship between patriotism and journalism during time of conflict, said that when it came to the crunch he would always be on the side of the American troops.[775] However, Christiansen refers to clear blue water between the likes of the unashamedly one-sided reporting of Fox and the objective balance of the BBC and the fact that unlike British politicians and

[771] Cardiff University report, p.32.
[772] Tumber & Palmer, p.165. Government criticism featured in the Butler Report which "severely criticised" BBC editorial and management processes for allowing the broadcast of an unchecked report on Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) by reporter Andrew Gilligan. The report was released on January 28th 2004 and attracted much media criticism for its "whitewash" of the government, exceptions being the Rupert Murdoch *Sun* and *Times* who concentrated on the blameworthiness of the BBC, in line with their "long-term agenda" on attacking the Corporation" (Tumber & Palmer pp.167-169).
[773] Chapman, p.155.
[774] Jowett & O'Donnell, p.295
[775] Christiansen, p.25.

military personnel, who are quite willing to face the abrasive interview style of Tim Sebastian and Jeremy Paxman, their American compatriots are clearly unnerved by such aggressive interview techniques.[776] In addition, in praise of the BBC, Christiansen points out to its relatively level-headed reporting and news presentation. In terms of embedded reporting, it is clear that good relationships were built up between UK military and media which, on the whole, showed support for the UK government agenda, although whether the media consciously realised this is a debatable point as the BBC's Director of News Richard Sambrook may have touched on when he admitted the difficulties of retaining a balance in reporting the news of a conflict in which the "British public were split from the start".[777]

Sambrook admits to the power of pictures but raises a key point in that some of the BBC audience complained that there was "too much live coverage from the front for them to really understand what was happening".[778] That, it is suggested, is exactly what the embedded reporter system was intended to achieve and in the close relationships that were built up, the embedded media may not have looked too hard at the end product of their endeavours, as Sylvester and Huffman conclude. TV journalist Byron Harris summed this up when he said that "the restrictions of the embedded process gave the military a tremendous opportunity to manage the news. We were tethered to them for transportation. We could not break away. If our unit was moving we had to move with them and could only rarely stop to talk to Iraqis."[779]

[776] Aufderheide, p.11, makes the point that coverage of international affairs in the USA is difficult in a country where "geography test scores are abysmal and isolationism a convenient fig leaf over ignorance" and public television audiences stand at only around 2%, compared with the well-established and respected public service ethos of the BBC. Also, over the past two decades the US news media has become consolidated into a few, very powerful, conglomerates with journalism accounting for only a small percentage of their profits. Profit is paramount and the number of overseas correspondents has been slashed and international coverage has plummeted [McChesney, Robert W., 'The US News Media and World War III', *Journalism* (Vol. 3, No. 1, 2002(p.20).
[777] Sambrook, Richard, in Beck & Downing (eds), p.16.
[778] Ibid, p.17.
[779] Sylvester & Huffman, p.148.

Journalist John Hamilton makes the additional point that being too close to the action, as embedded reporters often were, made war more difficult for the average viewer to understand. Hamilton claims: "Some compare it to looking at an elephant through a drinking straw: you only get to see a small part of the larger picture" and maintains that through the embedded system the public "were less informed"[780] Former *Panorama* editor Roger Bolton stresses that this is the problem with making political television in that it encourages a superficial approach, a picture driven one.[781] He also comments on "an insidious form of self-censorship" which comes from the desire to preserve "contacts", such as the Parliamentary Lobby[782] and the need for "exclusive" stories which are, in fact, government leaks and leaves the journalist unable to check the facts but still anxious to print the story. The reward for the politician is dictating the agenda.[783] In 1991, according to Mark Laity, in Riyadh as a BBC journalist, he felt that he had "a good deal" with regard to briefings and background information and could see the big picture in comparison with what he calls poor and lack of detailed briefings at the Doha centre in 2003 linked with the too-narrow focus of the embedded reporters. "The grammar of TV, the grammar of journalism requires that the story comes from the place where the smoke is thickest," he told me.[784] In other words, it was the whiz-bang action provided by the embedded reporters in the front line, which dominated the TV coverage at the expense of the bigger picture and a more detailed analysis. The BBC's Director of News Richard Sambrook later suggested that the difficulty with a 24-hour news

[780] Hamilton, p.31. Also in Hooper, p.51 who remarks that the camera cannot capture the broad panorama of action on its own; that is up to the reporter.
[781] Bolton, Roger 'The Problems of Making Political Television: A Practitioner's Perspective', in Golding et al, p.94.
[782] Note: The UK Parliamentary Lobby system is an arrangement where accredited journalists are accredited as a bloc to hear off-the-record briefings by senior ministers on a regular basis. This elite group may be flattered to be privy to government confidences but is bound by the rules of the game to censor itself communicating many specific aspects of what it hears. In terms of military information many Parliamentary correspondents are not adept at handling details and thus can be fed comfortable generalities [Downing, John, 'Government Secrecy and the Media in the United States and Britain', in Golding et al, p.157].
[783] Bolton, pp103-104.
[784] Campbell, J.T. Interview with Mark Laity 14, August 2007..

channel was that you were trying to work out live on air what was true and what was not.[785]

The *Independent's* Robert Fisk, with 30 years' experience of reporting from the Middle East, makes a similar comment on the "closeness" of relationships between the embedded media and the military. "These journalists were dependent on the troops for communications, perhaps for their lives. And there was thus a profound desire to fit in, to "work the system", a frequent and growing absence of critical facilities, Fisk maintains.[786] The BBC's Jeremy Bowen, too, has his criticism of the embedded system. Bowen remarks that in 2003 some people saw embeds as a cop-out, "a betrayal of important principles of journalistic integrity and independence. I do not think it was, as long as the reporters who did it remembered what they were there for, and the basics of journalism," he says. "Journalists should do journalism, not the official history of the unit to which they were attached", Bowen claims. He pays tribute to embedded reporters such as James Mates and Gavin Hewitt but adds "Problems start if only viewers are led to believe that the very focused and narrow look at the war coming from an embedded reporter is the whole truth, when it is only a fraction of it." Inexperienced reporters in that situation can produce very superficial work.[787] This picks up on Hamilton's analogy of looking at an elephant through a straw.

Unilaterals, journalists who were not tied to the military and took the risk of travelling independently in the war zone, viewed the embedded system with suspicion. Australian reporter Peter Wilson points to false information given to embedded reporters which was then fed to viewers, for example the embedded reporter story of a Shiite rising in Basra, was praised on air by British deputy commander Major-General Peter Wall as "just the sort of encouraging indication we have been looking for". Al-Jazeera reported that there had been no uprising. Wall wrote: "They were right. Coalition officials later conceded to me privately that the uprising claim was a

[785] Stanyer, p.424.
[786] Fisk, p.766.
[787] Bowen, pp.112-113. Also Campbell/Bowen interview.

deliberate lie aimed at encouraging the real thing."[788] This implies that UK military authorities made use of disinformation and propaganda.

Television and the embedded reports from the front line meant that one week into Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, the public saw more of the conflict than they saw in all of the 1991's Persian Gulf War. New technology had created a real-time television war.[789] That war was welcomed by the TV stations who enthusiastically embraced the embedded system, with all its restrictions and inhibitions that in other contexts, they rejected. For example Miles, in his study of the Arab *Al Jazeera* TV station, refers to British Prime Minister Tony Blair and his Director of Communications Alastair Campbell summoning top British broadcasters and warning them about support for Al-Qaeda and "acceptable reporting." *BBC, ITN* and *Sky* issued joint statement which read: "As responsible broadcasters we are mindful of national and international security issues and the impact reports can have in different communities and cultures. But we will retain the right to exercise our own independent, impartial editorial judgement…the provision of independent and impartial news is a fundamental part of a free society and democratic process."[790] Looking at the relationships both the Blair and Eden governments had with the BBC, Jonathan Powell states: "All governments have problems with the BBC, and as a general rule that is to the BBC's credit."[791]

With this in mind it seems that Campbell may not have learned from Eden's attempts to threaten, censor or put financial pressure on the BBC in order that they take the government line as has been indicated in this study's Suez chapter. He had not learned from Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's demands during the Falklands conflict that the BBC take a more "patriotic" line in objection to *Panorama* and *Newsnight* programmes over the use of pundits and film from Argentinean

[788] Wilson, Peter, *Long Drive Through a Short War: Reporting on the Iraq War* (Victoria, Australia: Hardie Grant Books, 2004), p.25.
[789] Hamilton, John, *War in Iraq: Real-Time Reporting* (Minnesota, USA: Abdo, 2004), p.6
[790] Miles, Hugh, *Al-Jazeera: How Arab TV News Challenged the World* (London: Abacus, 2005), p.118.
[791] Powell, p.205.

sources.[792] Indeed, Campbell's reaction was similar to that of the U.S Conservative element in the study by Wall and Bicket, an element which was openly hostile to the "Baghdad Broadcasting Corporation". Since September 11 Americans have increasingly turned to the BBC as a respected, objective, public service broadcaster.[793] As an example of pressure put on the BBC, Alastair Campbell, in his diary entry of 9 November, 2002, recollects calling BBC Director of News Richard Sambrook about coverage of UK military operations in Afghanistan saying it was a "fucking disgrace."[794]

In retrospect, current BBC Political Editor Nick Robinson, said 10 years later: "The build-up to the invasion of Iraq is the point in my career when I have most regretted not pushing harder and not asking more questions, but I reject the idea that I and my colleagues were either the willing slaves of government hell-bent on propaganda or naïve dupes."[795]

Yet here is a contrast – on the one hand the BBC and other TV stations take the Nick Robinson approach and robustly refute any suggestion of censorship over war coverage, yet accept similar, although perhaps more subtle censorship, inherent in the embedded reporter system. On the former point it is worth pondering on a quote of Patrick Gordon Walker, Foreign Secretary in the first (1964) Harold Wilson Labour administration: "We must not take too seriously the claims of the press and TV networks to be guardians of liberty and of the public's right to know. The media are unlikely to be the best judges of what is in the national interest. This, indeed, is not their principal goal, which is to increase circulation and ratings."[796]

[792] Mercer, Derrik, Mungham, Geoff & Williams, Kevin: *The Fog of War* (London: William Heinemann, 1987), p.132.
[793] Wall & Bicket, p.124.
[794] Campbell, A., *Countdown to Iraq*, p.84.
[795] Robinson, p.394.
[796] Gordon Walker, Patrick, 'Secrecy and Openness in Foreign Policy Decision-Making: A British Cabinet Perspective', in Franck, Thomas M., & Weisband, /Edward (eds), *Secrecy and Foreign Policy* London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.50.

In contrast, a much younger Patrick Gordon Walker in 1944, while the Second World War was still in progress but Labour were planning for a post-war election, uses the word "propaganda" in a policy document addressed to Labour's National Executive. Dated July 13th, 1944, it looks ahead to the end of the war and argues that Labour must prepare for a renewal of political warfare. It almost looks forward to the Alastair Campbell era by underlining the need for "members with special knowledge and experience" to produce better "propaganda which is presently indifferent in quality and not calculated to compete in any sense with modern advertising methods."[797] Gordon Walker goes on to make a plea for modernisation of propaganda with a proper use of radio, a proper press service and methods for winning and holding the new masses that are not automatically attracted by traditional Labour appeals.[798]

Here we have the classic contrast of agendas which has been referred to earlier in this passage, with journalists clinging to the portrait of media in a democratic society as the guardians of the peoples' rights, objective, ethical and incorruptible; certainly not engaging in self-censorship. Politicians, on the other hand, wish to win political battles and have their own agenda which can be in direct conflict with journalists in time of conflict and can lead to the politicians' demanding journalistic self-censorship in the national interest.

This same self-censorship came into the equation in Iraq 2002 as Western TV stations with embedded reporters infrequently screen the gory details of war. Hiro, in his study of the Iraq 2003 war, maintains that *al-Jazeera* provided straight news (objective, ethical and incorruptible?) "that in many ways gave their viewers a more rounded picture- than the Anglo American networks did. They showed the devastation of war, grievously wounded civilians, charred bodies of Iraqi soldiers, hospitals choked with wounded and burned Iraqis."[799] Miles underlines the fact that *al-Jazeera* from the start of the conflict, rejected the legitimacy of the invasion and

[797] Greenwood, Tony papers, Bodleian Library Ms. Eng. C.6294, Folio 3.
[798] Ibid., Folio 6.
[799] Hiro, Dilip, *Secrets and Lies: The True Story of the Iraq War* (London: Methuen, 2005), p.192.

continued to take this subjective view in the way it edited and juxtaposed its pictures and scripts.[800] In comparison the US/UK television footage played a crucial (for them) role in identifying the "good" and the "bad" sides and broadly legitimising the causes and intended outcomes of the war.[801] It did it by appearing to be impartial and objective since it was seen through the eyes of the embedded reporter such as CNN's Christiane Ammanpour who remarked that the coalition troops wanted to be seen "as benefactors not just as bombers".[802] The pictures shown through embedded reporters did not reflect the suffering of the Iraqi people to reflect "the politics of pity", in other words the showing of death and suffering. Instead, they reflected an aura of objectivity and impartial observation, two points which separate this view from that of propaganda, which presupposes a prior commitment of the spectator to a cause. Chouliaraki concludes that the *politics of pity* (her phrase), in contrast, is moved by the suffering he or she witnesses before exercising his or her right to make a decision on which side to take and in the case of embedded reporting the moving pictures provided to the spectator removed that option.[803] Similarly, the "moving pictures" provided during the bombing of Baghdad at the opening of the war were of missiles and bombs landing in the dark, flashes of light and the noises of impact and anti-aircraft fire. In other words, the "suffering" of the people of Baghdad was expressed largely in non-human terms with the "sufferer" verbalised as "compounds" and "buildings" and work to subtract the sympathy away from the personal aspects.[804] To report on and picture a sobbing father trying to dig his baby girl out of the ruins of his house fall under the "politics of pity"; to report on the bombing of a city through the night footage of moving pictures provided does not. It is too impersonal.

[800] Miles, Hugh, *Al-Jazeera: How Arab TV News Challenged the World* (London: Abacus, 2005), p. 242.
[801] Chouliaraki, p.263.
[802] Ibid, p.264.
[803] Ibid, p.265.
[804] Chouliaraki, p.272.

Taylor comments on TV's "pathological need for moving pictures" which delivers it into the hands of those who control access.[805] In the case of Iraq 1991 it was the military that controlled that access either through restricting the movements of the media at the battle front or providing pictures from their own military media teams. Steele, in her examination of television news in the 1991 Iraq War, refers to "the operational bias of television journalism presenting only the most narrowly framed coverage of the war."[806] As a result there was endless footage of what the Allied commanders were prepared to allow to be filmed and no pictures at all of the situation in Iraq.[807] The inevitable result is that coverage was biased because the story has to be led by pictures. Taylor adds; "More importantly, the speed of communications technology has eroded our capacity to reflect, interpret, and sift. The imperative is to get the story on the air, no matter how dubious or uncorroborated it is."[808] Schlesinger also comments that TV is pictures; it feeds on them and must always have them. There can be silence on the screen, no words, no music, and no sound effects – but there must always be pictures.[809] Pictures, live pictures, of battle action is what the embedded reporter system provided on a 24-hour a day basis, making the viewing figures swoop up as outlined elsewhere in this chapter, but perhaps at the expense of standing back and analysing what had actually happened, as stated in the report on embedded journalists by Cardiff University's School of Journalism, already referred to.

This lack of analysis is strongly supported by Ted Koppel, ABC anchorman and a journalist who has covered wars from the Vietnam conflict until Iraq 2003. Koppel says that in Vietnam up to three days could pass between the time a story was written and it got on the air. In contrast in Iraq 2003 a journalist had to be prepared

[805] Taylor, p.16.
[806] Steele, Janet, E., 'Experts and the Operational Bias of Television News: The Case of the Persian Gulf War,' *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* (Vol.72, No.4, Winter 1995) p.809 .
[807] Ibid, p.16.
[808] Naughton, John, *The Observer* (20 January 1991).
[809] Schlesinger, Philip, *Putting Reality Together* (London: Methuen, 1987), p.128.

to go on the air instantly, 24-hours a day. Koppel's view is that this meant less time for the journalist to think about and report events.[810]

Therefore, if film material supplied by embedded reporters, up at the frontline, is further restricted by the conditions in which the embedded reporter and cameraman are working, and the bonds that have been formed between military and media which may affect journalistic objectivity, the weight of reporting surely tends to favour the military point of view, somewhat near to propaganda or, as referred to by Lt.Col. Sean Tully, "information management." On this point, the BBC's Caroline Wyatt felt that as a TV reporter doing live broadcasts from the "hub", where she received the tapes from her embedded colleagues with front line units, she was operating in a vacuum since she was in a small rear area not up at the operational divisional HQ and kept short of briefings. "It was a pact with the devil we all signed," she later commented.[811]

Evidence submitted here may point to the fact that the UK and US governments considered this point of view when setting up embedded reporting in Iraq 2003, putting reporters with front line fighting units to get their own pictures and copy. This dissertation's contention is that this was just another way of maintaining control whilst, on the surface, appearing to be offering unbiased access in return for favourable third party endorsement of policy, although as Col. Paul Brook told the author of this dissertation there was no official plan on these lines. There may be a distinction to be made here between the UK and the US media, the latter, according to McChesney, having a record of supporting "official sources" and becoming a "superior propaganda organ for militarism and war".[812]

On the British side, Col. Brook, one of the military media planners on the embedded programme, is adamant that the programme was designed to give the media better facilities than they had had in the 1991 conflict and that the Stockholm syndrome

[810] Hess, Stephen & Kalb, p.6.
[811] Campbell, J. T., Wyatt interview.
[812] McChesney, p11.

arose purely by accident. He says that the fact that TV in particular concentrated on the action footage at the expense of strategic analysis was their choice and that this was not the military media plan. "There was no conspiracy here," he said. "It was more cock-up than conspiracy which led to this."[813]

This study does not accept what may be is an honestly-offered view and will further examine the "conspiracy" contention in the Conclusions chapter.

5.5. Relationships between media, media minders and military

In this context, it is worth noting the views of "unilateral" journalist Christopher Walker who covered the 1991 war and criticised "too many" of his fellow journalists for trying to be soldiers. Yet he makes a comment which may well point to the principle of embedded reporters being in the British military mind as far back as 1991. In the post 1991 War report produced by the *International Press Institute* he refers to the restrictions on movement and lack of facilities provided by the military, but adds: "The Ministry of Defence showed more subtlety and deviousness than the Pentagon and attempted to defuse criticism by 'bonding' journalists so closely to their units (and even providing them with unusable secret information about plans) that some even began writing like soldiers as in 'I think I can say on behalf of the whole 4th Armoured Brigade etc'".[814]

The closeness which can develop between media and military implicit in the embedded arrangement was referred to by Morrison and Tumber in their analysis of news reporting during the Falklands War. Although the arrangements for media coverage caused much controversy on the long ship-borne route to the Falklands (where the media were looked after by MOD civilian information officers) when the

[813] Campbell, J.T. Interview with Colonel Paul Brook.
[814] Walker, Christopher, in Preston, Peter (Ed), *Reporting the War: A collection of experiences and reflections on the Gulf War* (London, British Executive of the International Press Institute, 1992), p.24.

landings took place and journalists shared the same hardships with the troops, the situation changed. The authors wrote: “In effect what was happening to the journalists was that their professional need to cover a story in a detached way was being slowly swamped by the very real, human need to belong, to be safe. The comradeship and closeness demonstrated by the troops, which the journalists so admired, were not just the random product that any occupational association throws up, but the response to having to work closely together especially during military exercises and having to solve tasks as a group.”[815] The authors make the point that when you are in the midst of battle and suffering the same fear and dangers as the soldiers alongside you it is not easy to hold on to the values of impartiality and objectivity of your editors, a safe 8000 miles away in the UK. The Guardian’s Ian Bruce eventually got through on a land line from the Falklands 1982 conflict to his office to be told that ‘perhaps he could do a more reflective piece’ and was told he sounded ‘very bitter’ at his curt response. Bruce said:

“That's because I am fucking bitter at this stage of the game. I want to go home. I'll hang on until everything's over but, [I'm] fairly shagged out. Bitter about people I know who are dead, and I think the whole thing's a waste of time in some ways. What have we done, we've liberated 700,000 sheep and 1800 sheep-shaggers. Terrific”.[816]

ITN’s John Martin refers to relationships being much better when they were with the troops and were without the MoD civilian “minders” who had accompanied the task force down through the Atlantic. He added: “They were actually quite amazed that we were living the same way as them. Not asking for anything more than them. Thought we were bonkers being there.”

One may agree with Morrison and Tumber in that much of the minders’ troubles in the Falklands stemmed from the ambiguity of their position. They were among the military but not of them; they found themselves perhaps unfairly

[815] Morrison, David E., & Tumber, Howard, Journalists at War: The Dynamics of News Reporting during the Falklands Conflict (London: Sage, 1988), p.99.
[816] Morrison & Tumber,p.103.

despised by both the reporters and the services. The information officers with the Task Force, had their positions compromised when they were told that they had to censor journalists' material as well as acting to arrange media facilities. This highlights the fact that censorship of journalists' material by the same civilian information officers who were there to provide facilities and factual information was not a wise move.[817] Nothing worse could have happened to destroy any trust between minder and media, especially since the material was being censored for a second time when it reached back to the MoD via Royal Navy satellite (bear in mind that the media had no satellite technology in the Falklands and were wholly dependent on the Royal Navy for transmission of their copy). Brigadier David Ramsbotham, a Director of Army Public Relations who went on to four-star general rank, later said that control of censorship should be based on operational needs and not on public relations.[818] There is merit in this in that the censorship duty should not have been forced on the MoD press officers and should have remained with the uniformed branch. Yet, Ramsbotham is missing the point, made by General Westmorland during the Vietnam War, that winning support on your home ground is just as much an operational need as planning an attack.

This point was made very clear by implementing the embedded media plan for Iraq 2003, where, it is contended, the main plank of the plan was to do just that; it was not brought in to satisfy the demands of the media for greater access to the battle front, as the media had unsuccessfully demanded in Iraq 1991.

[817] Additional research question No.2 is: What censorship of UK media was taking place?
[818] Morrison & Tumber, p.191.

6. Analysis and Conclusions

6.1. Official sources and the release of information to the media

A foreign policy which has weaknesses can be glossed over by an effective and persuasive media agenda building strategy, as it was with the embedded reporter initiative in 2003; there were only four members in the Coalition then, no Arab countries involved and no United Nations Security Council Resolution to give the invasion of Iraq international legitimacy as there was with the 1991 conflict.

Eden was in a similar position to Blair in terms of limited international support for military action. A key figure in building an effective media agenda building strategy should have been Eden's Press Secretary William Clark. However, by mid-1956 when the Suez crisis escalated the relationship between them had become strained with Clark looking for a more strategic view of press affairs and Eden depending on a more tactical approach, an approach which relied heavily on Eden himself briefing influential, and mainly right wing, national newspaper editors and their autocratic owners. Clark was isolated from influence, compared to the position of Blair's Director of Communications Alastair Campbell who was at the centre of UK government media planning and strategy and had Blair's confidence. Indeed, Campbell, unlike Clark, was a potent communications policy force in the War Cabinet and a force for change.[819]

Clark, in contrast, reveals his frustration with Eden approach and asserts that there was no "big design" in terms of being ahead of events and, by implication, no real public relations strategy with a narrow fire-fighting role obscuring what was the big picture. He feared that the result of the mishandling of the Egyptian situation would "result in some terrible humiliation when the war begins".[820] In the age before spin

[819] Campbell, A., *Countdown to Iraq,* p.529.
[820] Morrison and Tumber, p.191.

doctors Eden was not very *political* in the sense of knowing how to lead and manipulate public opinion through the media.

Eden failed in government agenda building since there was no real media strategy in his plans, other than personal talks to editors and the use of propaganda, often "black propaganda" at that. There were no carefully crafted communications strategies to cultivate good and supportive coverage.[821] Certainly to the mainly right-wing press who were supporters of the Conservative Party and who, like the *Daily Express* and *Daily Telegraph* clung to the old British Empire image, a weak Eden would be counter-productive to their own media policy and philosophy. They had already attacked him over him signing an agreement with Nasser two years before to withdraw British forces from the Suez Canal by 1956.[822] The absence of these forces then allowed Nasser to send his own troops into the zone on July 26th 1956 prompting the right-wing media to call for military action to retake Suez. It was only Eden's personal assurances to newspaper editors and proprietors that he would not pursue a policy of appeasement and would take action that brought them over to his side. As noted in the Suez chapter, two senior members of Eden's Cabinet visited the *Daily Telegraph's* owner Lord Berry, his main critic, and the next day assured him that Eden would pursue the *Telegraph's* imperialist line.[823] Berry then changed the policy line of his newspaper and swung it behind Eden.

Nevertheless, as the crisis developed the internal differences within the Eden administration did not augur well for a cohesive media agenda building policy. Above all, to carry out effective external communications, any government must have effective internal communications and with Eden and his press secretary at odds this was hardly likely to happen. The erratic nature of Eden's decision making was also referred to by Sir Norman Brook, Cabinet Secretary at the time who told Clark that the Cabinet had "blundered around a bit" not because Eden could not

[821] Negrine, Ralph, *The Communication of Politics* (London: Sage, 1996), p.10.
[822] Shaw, p.24, Julian Amery interview, SUEZOHP: 1, 1989 June 12, p.12.
[823] Shaw, p.36.See also Clark and Shuckburgh.

make up his mind, but because he came to a decision without full consultation with other Cabinet members.[824]

Moreover, the diaries of Mountbatten, Eden's First Sea Lord, and Sir Walter Monckton, his Minister of Defence, also show deep internal divisions within the Eden administration, hardly a firm foundation on which to build a lasting and successful media agenda-building strategy. Monckton, writing to a colleague in September 1956, says he had no doubt Nasser could be defeated militarily, but this tactical aim would be overshadowed by the lack of a strategic aim "if world opinion turns against us?"[825] World opinion did turn against Eden and his policy of military action in Suez and quickly forced a withdrawal of the UK, French and Israeli forces involved. The adverse effects of a military invasion of Suez on world opinion were also the fear of the soldier who commanded all forces on *Operation Musketeer,* General Sir Charles Keightley. He doubted Eden's ability to win international support and warned that without this the military operation would fail. Keightley remarked that "Western world opinion" had to be won.[826] Richard Powell, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence also said that invasion would turn world opinion against the UK.[827]

Monckton had referred to Eden's ignoring the effects of negative world opinion in order to achieve tactical military success. Mountbatten, looking to hold on to domestic support and avoid harmful media speculation was angry at Eden's refusal to issue any press releases when three ships of the Suez invasion force were about to leave port. His argument that it was widely known in these ports that the ships were about to leave and that press rumours and stories would get out of hand if they were not given a reasonable amount of information was rebuffed by Eden, despite the support for Mountbatten of Eden's own press secretary William Clark.[828]

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[824] Kyle, Keith, 'The Mandarin's Mandarin: Sir Norman Brook, Secretary of the Cabinet', in Kelly, Saul and Gorst, Anthony (eds), *Whitehall and the Suez Crisis* (Oxford, Frank Cass, 2000), p.47.
[825] Monckton Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Box 7, Nos. 168-170.
[826] Adamthwaite, p.453.
[827] Adamthwaite, p.467.
[828] Mountbatten Papers, MB1/N107. Folder 2.

Here was yet another constructive and sensible arrangement for releasing material to the media rejected by Eden who continued to rely on his personal briefings to editors and proprietors.

Eden's obsession to get rid of Nasser at all costs, led to his ignoring advice from Cabinet colleagues, his own press adviser, his military chiefs and producing a government media handling agenda which certainly at the start of the Suez Crisis won the majority of media support, whereas Tony Blair had substantial media and public doubts to face in order to win support for his agenda, like Eden that of regime change.

Also, Blair took a more strategic view as his address to the House of Commons on 18 March 2003 showed. Blair said: "The country and the Parliament reflect each other. This is a debate that, as time has gone on, has become less bitter but no less grave. So why does it matter so much? Because the outcome of this issue will now determine more than the fate of the Iraqi regime and more than the future of the Iraqi people who have been brutalised by Saddam for so long, important though those issues are. It will determine the way in which Britain and the world confront the central security threat of the 21st century, the development of the United Nations, the relationship between Europe and the United States, the relations within the European Union and the way in which the United States engages with the rest of the world. So it could hardly be more important. It will determine the pattern of international politics for the next generation."[829]

Also addressing the House of Commons, on 3 November 1956, Eden showed that he was thinking short term and not strategically. He said: "The first and urgent task is to separate these combatants and to stabilise the position. That is our purpose. If the United Nations were then willing to take over the physical task of maintaining peace in that area, no one would be better pleased than we. But police action there

[829] Hansard, HC Deb, 18 March 2003, c760.

must be to separate the belligerents and to prevent a resumption of hostilities."[830] From the exposé of the Treaty of Sèvres, as outlined in the Suez empirical chapter here, Eden was lying to Parliament and hiding the agreement made between the United Kingdom, France and Israel to invade Egypt.

In Eden's case the media were not aware of all the facts, the internal dissensions within the Eden administration, the Sèvres agreement and the involvement of Israel in which Eden lied to the media and the nation. As a result *The Times*, which had supported Eden from Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal, switched its support to opposition once hostilities had started. The editor and proprietor felt they had been used by Eden all along through his confidential briefings of its editor Haley, and its foreign editor McDonald.[831] Only the *Daily Sketch* and the *Daily Express* remained to support Eden.[832] His media agenda-building strategy had failed, which was not the case for Blair in Iraq 2003.

Certainly the media structure was by 2003 radically different and technology had produced portable satellite equipment which would have made it almost impossible for military authorities to enforce a blanket news ban in the battle area.[833] Yet there was also a key difference in approach in media handling between the UK and USA, as Lieutenant Commander Steve Tatham outlined in an interview for this dissertation. The USA had decided that all its media coverage was going to come from the embedded journalists, whereas the UK opted for a different system, the major information plan coming from a strategic level, from Downing Street, from the press office there, from the Ministry of Defence and from three Allied Press Information Centres at the operational level.[834] The intention was to "flesh out" the embedded journalist reports with a more detailed and informed type of briefing at the Allied Press Information Centres but, according to Tatham and others the media became fascinated with the imagery from the front line embedded reporting

[830] *Hansard, House of Commons debate 03 November 1956 vol 558 cc1857-73, p.187.*
[831] Shaw, p.70.
[832] Thomas, Hugh, *The Suez Affair* (London: 1967), p.133.
[833] Hamilton, John, *War in Iraq: Real-Time Reporting* (Minnesota, USA: Abdo, 2004), p.27.
[834] Campbell, J.T., Interview with Lieutenant Commander Steve Tatham.

which dominated television,[835] This was at the expense of a more strategic analysis of events by the media but it is worth noting Seib's observation on war reporting that journalists working within the embedded reporter system may have found it tempting to set aside judgement in return for speed.[836] The demands of 24-hour media coverage, especially with television, led to an increasing demand for fresh pictures to feed a hungry audience, an audience which in television terms had dramatically risen in 2002-2003 with CNN being joined by other worldwide news networks which had not existed in 1991, including BBC News 24, BBC World and Fox.

The UK and US authorities provided that material through the embedded system; the media accepted the embedded system at face value as a means to get the front-line coverage themselves that they were denied in the 1991 conflict. Thus the arrangements were acceptable to both parties in what may, in retrospect, appear to be a Faustian bargain – the authorities being Mephistopheles and the media taking the Dr Faustus role without fully appreciating the advantages it gave to the politicians and military.

This "bargain" can hardly be blamed on the embedded journalists who were doing precisely what they were supposed to do in their somewhat isolated positions with individual military units. Perhaps the blame, if blame is to be apportioned, lies with producers and editors at the home end of the satellite link whose editorial judgement became more biased towards the "entertainment" side of television rather than the informative, as Taleb notes, a term he describes as "infotainment" with news being framed in a more attractive package for the public.[837]

From the perspective of the UK government's media agenda-building policy mobilising, informing and persuading the public are integral to the conduct of war in

[835] Stanyer, p.422.
[836] Seib, Philip, *Beyond the Front Lines: How the News Media Cover a World shaped by War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.12.
[837] Taleb, p.4.

order to win and retain support. This was particularly crucial in the 2003 conflict in which, like Suez 1956, there was no official sanction of a UNSCR to invade Iraq and also no large 35-member Coalition including Arab members as there was in Iraq 1991. The result, as Brown points out, is that attempting to shape a favourable representation of the conflict becomes more important for the belligerents even as it becomes harder to do.[838] This, it is contended, could be an important factor as to why the arrangements for embedded reporters were made. In any case, such as Iraq 2003, any belligerent would have to consider how to win the media over to its own agenda building without appearing overtly to either censor the news or engage in propaganda. The embedded system fulfilled that role and, in addition, it obliged the media to concentrate on the military aspects and not on civilian casualties, producing images referred to by Konstantinidou as "perception management", the desire by US and UK authorities to keep the visual representation of death off Western television screens.[839] Seib underlines the dangers to any belligerent which allows the media to capture images of, for example, dead and wounded women and children, crying and distraught relatives, bombed hospitals and so on which conflict with the official dominant story line of "grand achievement and noble sacrifice".[840]

However, to bring international pressure to stop the conflict it was in Saddam Hussein's interests to show civilian casualties in order to increase international opposition to the invasion of his country and UK domestic opposition in a country already divided on whether or not to support the war. He did this by allowing Western reporters access and also through the Arab TV stations such as al-Jazeera whose pictures also went out to Western TV stations. Western reporters were allowed to film the devastation, horribly charred remains being brought out to ambulances and angry relatives screaming in grief.[841] These sorts of images were counterproductive to UK and US government aims as Konstantinidou reveals in her

[838] Brown, p.87
[839] Konstantinidou, p.149.
[840] Seib, p.xiv.
[841] Ibid.

study of the Greek press coverage of Iraq 2003, images which aroused opposition to the invasion of Iraq and the rationale behind the conflict.[842]

6.2. Censorship during conflict.

It was not only the BBC Eden attempted to censor; he also "censored" his own Cabinet by denying them vital intelligence information. Former Joint Intelligence Committee chairman Sir Percy Cradock says that intelligence was being used selectively by Eden in disregard of the no-confrontation policy approved by the Cabinet, which had voted for a less belligerent policy of long-term isolation of Nasser.[843] This is also confirmed by Dorrill who claims that Eden only wanted to hear information which suited his own conclusions.[844] Adamthwaite adds that valuable experience and advice was lost to Eden when he failed to consult the Permanent Under Secretary's Committee, a think tank for the coordination of foreign and defence policies.[845] The Cabinet Permanent Secretary Sir Norman Brook later said that the whole Suez affair had been a folly, a folly perhaps exacerbated by Eden's neglect of this senior Civil Service policy group.[846]

Censorship may, by definition, involve suppressing material before publication but I contend that by selective use of intelligence released to the Cabinet and non-consultation with Brook's committee, Eden was in fact censoring information which should have been bought before his Egypt Committee, or War Cabinet, and the full Cabinet. A more informed Cabinet and Permanent Secretary's Committee might have had the information to pressure the Prime Minister to bring it before Parliament where it would then have entered the public domain through media reporting Parliamentary affairs and publication in *Hansard.* In addition, better informed Cabinet members may have been able to give informal and non-attributable briefings to the Parliamentary Lobby which, if reported, might have

[842] Konstantinidou, p.150.
[843] Cradock, p.117.
[844] Dorrill, pp.602-3.
[845] Adamthwaite, p.452.
[846] Shuckburgh, p366.

changed the views of key national newspaper editors and proprietors who had thrown their support behind Eden in the lead-up to the actual military invasion of Suez. Cohen refers to this in his study of relationships between the media and the UK Foreign Office (4.3.) and the practice of Cabinet ministers who disagree with collective Cabinet decisions giving "unattributable" briefings to the media in order to revive their own views and attempt to undermine, or change, Cabinet policy.[847] Yet in the case of Suez disaffected Cabinet ministers did not have the detailed information, the ammunition, to leak to the media since Eden was only allowing them to see selective intelligence.

Certainly, Eden's actions over selective use of intelligence were more a sin of omission rather than commission, in other words the deliberate holding back of information from Cabinet colleagues, Parliament and eventually the media and public. However, to continue the religious analogy his actions to attempt to censor the BBC were "sins of commission", deliberate, planned and calculated to frighten the BBC into either toeing Eden's line or, at least from a damage limitation point of view, not carrying material which opposed the Prime Minister's policy. You will note it is referred to as "Eden's line" and the "Prime Minister's policy" and not the Government's line and policy since, as noted above, Eden had withheld information from his Cabinet, information which might have forced a different policy of long-term isolation of Nasser rather than a military solution. This differed from Blair's position where he had the support, apart from Foreign Secretary Robin Cook who resigned over the lack of a UNSCR, of his Cabinet and Parliament for military action against Iraq and had a Director of Communication, Alastair Campbell, who was at the centre of government agenda building and had his Prime Minister's trust, unlike William Clark who was isolated by Eden and later resigned.

Turning to direct attempts to censor the media Cockerell in his study of the relationships between British prime ministers and television highlights the severe differences which arose between Eden and what he called "these Communists at

[847] Cohen, p.72.

the BBC." Eden was railing at the BBC over the demand of the Leader of the Opposition, Hugh Gaitskell, to the right to reply to Prime Ministerial broadcasts given at key points during the Suez Crisis, a right that the public have come to expect in a democratic Britain.[848] Seymour-Ure, writing on relationships between British prime ministers and the media, reveals Eden's autocratic attitude at expecting to address the nation at will during the Suez Crisis when the rules stated that strictly he had to be invited to make a ministerial broadcast, and that broadcast was likely to involve the offer of a "right to reply to the Leader of the Opposition".[849]

Indeed, this was bought up by Labour M.P Willie Hamilton in a debate in the House on 25 October 1956, following Sir Anthony Eden's statement that he had made, up until then, apart from news interviews, "one broadcast on the Suez Canal situation."[850] Mr Hamilton replied, as Hansard records: "Can the right hon. Gentleman say with whom the initiative lies in effecting these broadcasts? Secondly, will these talks count as party political broadcasts, because there is—[HON. MEMBERS : "Oh."]—indeed there-is—a feeling in the country that they have been used for that end. Is he aware that if this abuse of the B.B.C. continues the Government are playing with fire?"[851] Hamilton was referring to Eden's attempt to deny Opposition leader Hugh Gaitskell the right of reply (as outlined in the Suez chapter) to what was, in effect, a party political broadcast and Eden's attempt to "censor" Gaitskell.

Censorship certainly took place when the invasion force set out for Egypt on November 3rd 1956 when Eden broadcast to the nation and the broadcast was relayed to the officers' messes on the ships, but was not relayed to the troops on board.[852] Eden's rifts with the BBC are clearly outlined in Section 4.2. No such censorship occurred with Blair who, to drum up media and public support,

[848] Cockerell, p.45.
[849] Seymour-Ure, Colin, *Prime Ministers and the Media: /issues of Power and Control* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), pp.38-39.
[850] Hansard, House of Commons debate *25 October 1956 vol 558 cc826-7, p.826.*
[851] Ibid.
[852] Cockerell, p.256.

constantly used newspapers, radio and TV interviews and briefings, although there were attempts by his Director of Communications Alastair Campbell to pressurize the BBC over the so-called “dodgy dossier”.

The evidence of government censorship or attempted censorship in Suez 1956 is quite clear in both documentation placed in the National Archives and in academic research into the Suez Crisis. However, there may be even more substantial evidence yet to be found since government papers, Cabinet and other minutes, are still being held back from being deposited in the National Archives well beyond the 30-Year Rule. This will be a fruitful source for further academic research when they are eventually released as will the hidden agenda-building policy of the Blair administration if, written evidence of this still exists and has not been destroyed as has happened to some of the Suez 1956 government documentation, including the Sèvres document.

So, Eden was engaged in overt censorship during the 1956 Suez Crisis. Research for this study shows that in Iraq 2003 the UK government and military were engaged in a more subtle covert censorship, partly based around the availability of new technology. Magder makes the point that in 1999 these new technologies conspired to make the job of controlling press coverage even more difficult. The most noteworthy of these was media use of satellites and in 1999, Space Imaging, a Colorado-based company, launched Ikonos, the first civilian satellite capable of rendering clear images of human bodies on the ground. This would seem a real opportunity for the media to use it in the Afghanistan conflict in the same year except that as the war began the Pentagon bought up exclusive rights to all Ikonos pictures of Afghanistan, even though it had already six imaging satellites in orbit, four of them Keyhole satellites, capable of rendering images estimated to be six to ten times greater than Ikonos.[853]

[853] Magder, p.38. Campbell, A., *Countdown to Iraq*, p.219

Although this was a US initiative, this again points out to a form of censorship by denying the media this satellite source and perhaps nudging them in the UK and USA towards the embed system where, on the face of it, they would get close-up images of the battle. Prime Minister Blair needed the support of the media in what was an unpopular war with substantial domestic opposition.[854] In particular, as Blair's Director of Communications Alastair Campbell noted, without the legitimacy conferred by a UNSCR the need to win that domestic support was even more vital and that Blair had said the UK had to get the USA to go down the UN route.[855] Here again is a similar situation to Suez 1956, a country split on the need for military action and regime change and two Prime Ministers, Eden and Blair, needing to win the agenda-building battle, secure media support and convince the public to support the government's political and military aims. Greenslade underlines this need to win domestic support when he makes this comparison with the unpopularity of the Suez Crisis and postulates that Iraq 2003 was probably the most controversial UK military adventure since then.[856] War reporter John Swain also remarks that this (Iraq 2003) was the first time the UK had sent troops into action without popular support since the Suez invasion.[857] Greenslade also notes that the embedded journalist system had won the support of major newspaper proprietors Rupert Murdoch and Conrad Black, who had backed military intervention in Iraq.[858] This was a willing bargain between both the UK political/military system and the media, but the question has to be asked what censorship was taking place by the political and military machine. Apart from the acceptance of the media that they could not publish or broadcast anything which endangered military operations and soldiers' lives (a point editors had signed up to when accepting embedded reporter places), it seems on the surface that no military censorship was involved in Iraq 2003.

[854] Moorcraft & Taylor, p.183.
[855] Campbell, Alastair, p.635.
[856] Greenslade, p.661.
[857] Swain, p.25.
[858] Greenslade, p.661

However, Mark Laity, a BBC defence correspondent in 1991 and a SHAPE spokesman in Iraq 2003, refers to censorship existing in the form of embedded reporters suffering from the *Stockholm syndrome*, too close an identification with the military unit with which they were embedded and affecting their objectivity.[859] BBC reporters Caroline Wyatt and Ben Brown also both referred to this in interviews, Wyatt adding that it was very hard to make sense of what was happening because the military people who were commanding the war were not at the front line embedded positions nor at the hubs (where Wyatt was) to process the material from the front and add her assessment.[860] Again, this points to an intended or unintended form of censorship on the part of the UK authorities in the form of censorship by default, in other words by failing (either deliberately or inadvertently) to supply facilities and briefings which would have provided the media, and thus the public, with a greater strategic insight of the military action.

The dominating media coverage in Iraq 2003 is of military action. This is key to government media agenda building for if the UK and U.S. governments were subject to media coverage of the "political violence" of civilians, especially women and children, being killed, that would be counter-productive to their political aims. Therefore, embedded reporting which showed only military conflict, would win more support and less opposition than showing civilian casualties. As Seib points out for political reasons, governments like to portray war as a Hollywood-type heroic exercise with civilian casualties not being allowed to infringe on the dominant "patriotic" story line.[861] Hammond, as does Mark Laity, also criticises the Doha briefings of substituting presentation for the lack of detail and quotes articles in the *Guardian* and *Independent* attacking the UK and US governments for the way the war was being spun and reported.[862]

[859] Campbell, J.T. Interview with Mark Laity.
[860] Campbell, J.T. Interview with Caroline Wyatt.
[861] Seib, p.xiv
[862] Hammond, p.61.

In looking for evidence of a deliberate censorship in-built to the embedded reporter system and the briefings at Doha, one can reflect on the words of Dick Cheney, in 2003 the US Vice President but in Iraq 1991 the US Defence Secretary. Sifry and Cerf quote Cheney in 1991 saying: "I do not look on the press as an asset. Frankly I looked on it as a problem to be managed". In other words, censorship is involved, albeit a more subtle form in Iraq 2003 than in Iraq 1991 and with the strong element of media self-censorship, described by Robert Fisk as "complacent and supine."[863]

In their study of war reporting in Iraq 2003, Sylvester and Huffman quote TV journalist Byron Harris admitting that the restrictions of the embedded process gave the military a tremendous opportunity to manage the news due to the media's utter dependence on the military units which with they were embedded for food, transport, protection as well as briefing"[864] Again, it is submitted, this is evidence of actual censorship at source, restriction of information to the media during news gathering rather than restriction of information by editing, censoring in other words, before publication or transmission. One can return again to Hamilton's analogy of looking at an elephant through a straw "where you see only a small part of the large picture".[865] To take his analogy further, the "straw" was the censorship implicit in the embedded reporter system.

6.3. The media and official sources

As the Suez Crisis dragged on through the summer and autumn of 1956 a breakdown in relationships came about between Sir Anthony Eden and his Press Secretary William Clark. Eden, rather than leaving Clark as the official No. 10 source for briefing the media, made direct approaches to editors, such as Arthur Christiansen of the *Daily Express* and Iverach McDonald, foreign editor of the *Times,* as Thorpe, Eden's own biographer with access to Eden's private

[863] Fisk,p.1152.
[864] Sylvester & Huffman, p.148.
[865] Hamilton, p.31.

correspondence points out.[866] Certainly these senior media editors responded favourably to Eden's approach and printed favourable articles on his determination to recover control of the Suez Canal, but as Turner and others show Eden at heart distrusted the media and felt that they should print what he said. There was no give and take in government media relations as Clark, a media professional would have carried out, while Eden expected that in a time of crisis the media should put a favourable slant on government actions.[867] Seymour-Ure reflects that Eden was put in a quandary through the breakdown of relationships between himself and his press secretary. He needed Clark's expertise to handle the media, remembering that it was media criticism which had brought down Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain early in the Second World War and led to Churchill becoming Prime Minister.[868] That expertise was lost and Clark's usefulness as an official source for the media to rely on was nullified.

Eden was left to carry out his own briefings, to add to the already heavy load he was carrying as both Prime Minister and as *de facto* Foreign Minister (he having side-lined the real office holder Selwyn Lloyd to a subordinate role, as Mathews, Cohen, and Selwyn Lloyd himself, have written).[869] Eden needed to keep on side the main newspaper proprietors, autocratic press barons with a shared interest in maintaining the world status of Britain and her empire, and convince this powerful media group that he would act decisively. For example, Eden carried this out with the *Daily Express* through personally briefing its editor Arthur Christiansen stressing that he would act to regain control of Suez but that the government needed time to prepare its plans and he needed that confidence respected. Christiansen passed this on to his proprietor Beaverbrook whose support was won.[870]

However, sections of the British Press, including the *Daily Mirror* and the *Guardian* still opposed Eden's Suez policy but as Parmentier notes they lifted their doubts as

[866] Thorpe, p.497.
[867] Turner, p.159.
[868] Seymour-Ure, p.125
[869] Mathews, p.56.
[870] Shaw, pp.30-34.

to supporting military action doubts as soon as military action was taken on October 25th 1956.[871] Shaw similarly highlights this dilemma faced by two of the newspapers most critical of Eden, the *News Chronicle* and the *Daily Mirror*. On October 31st , 1956, the day virtually all the newspapers carried news that British troops would be moving into Suez, both newspapers, Shaw says, were "conspicuously non-committal and affected by indecision".[872] Clark, as a government spokesman, was essential to the media which, in many cases, becomes dependent upon such an "official source" but the media by then were well aware that he did not have Eden's confidence.[873]

Eden may have been a successful "official source" for the bulk of the UK media in the lead-up to the actual invasion of Suez but as Negrine notes governments have to use carefully crafted communications strategies to ensure they get "good press" for their policies.[874] Lord Hill, who conducted a review of government communications after the Suez debacle, was scathing about the lack of guidance given to government spokesmen by the Eden administration. His findings were particularly critical of the presentation of the UK Suez case overseas, but also of the lack of access by press office professionals to their ministers and the perception by permanent officials of press officers as a "necessary evil".[875]

Eden may have lacked a firmly-founded media strategy but this was not the case with Tony Blair and embedded reporting was a key weapon in the UK government's media agenda-building strategy. It became a very attractive proposition to the media in that it *appeared* to give them access to the front of battle, an access they were denied in the 1991 Iraq conflict.

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[871] Parmentier, p.438.
[872] Shaw, p.72.
[873] Page, Benjamin I., p.22. Page also cites Sigal 1973, Gans 1980, Bennett 1990 and Soley 1992, as underlining this media dependence on official sources.
[874] Negrine, p.10.
[875] Hill, p.185.

Maltby refers to the "seductiveness of facilities such as "embedding" which may provide reporters with unprecedented access to front lines but which, in reality encourage them to identify with military goals and detracts attention from the wider political and moral context of the war.[876] Maltby's academic analysis is reinforced by the practical experience of Mark Laity. A NATO military spokesman in 2003, having switched from journalism, he is quite honest about the advantage of the embedded system to the military and political machine and points out that if you put a reporter with the average British soldier for any length of time, they will end up sympathising with them.[877]

Christiansen qualifies this relationship by commenting that good relationships were built up between UK military and media which, on the whole, showed support for the UK government political and military agenda.[878] This does indicate an uncomfortable reliance on official sources although whether the media consciously realised this is debatable. The BBC's Director of News during the conflict, Richard Sambrook, may have touched on this when he admitted the difficulties of retaining a balance in reporting the news in which the "British public were split from the start".[879]

When we reflect on the views of several journalists and analysts set out in this dissertation about the dominance of television images in reporting the war, images filed by embedded reporters relying solely on "official sources", criticism about the lack of analysis of events emerges. On this Sambrook admits to the power of pictures but does raise a key point in that some of the BBC audience actually complained that there was "too much live coverage from the front for them to really understand what was happening".[880]

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[876] Maltby, Sarah, 'Communicating War: Strategies and Implications', in Maltby, Sarah & Keeble, Richard (eds), *Communicating War: Memory, Media and Military* (Bury St Edmunds: Arima Publishing, 2007), p.4.
[877] Campbell, JT, Interview with Mark Laity 14 Aug, 2007.
[878] Christiansen, p.25.
[879] Sambrook, p.16.
[880] Ibid, p.17.

That, it is suggested, is exactly what the embedded reporter system was intended to achieve and in the close relationships that were built up, the embedded media may not have looked too hard at the end product of their endeavours, as Sylvester and Huffman conclude. They quote TV journalist Byron Harris summing this up when he said that "the restrictions of the embedded process gave the military a tremendous opportunity to manage the news. We were tethered to them for transportation. We could not break away. If our unit was moving we had to move with them and could only rarely stop to talk to Iraqis."[881]

Embedded reporting seemed free of obvious media manipulation by the military on the whole, apart from some crude attempts, which will be raised in the next section (Section 6.4.). However, it could be argued that the UK government had made embedded reporting arrangements, freely accepted by the media, as a great improvement on the pooled journalist system of the 1991 Iraq War. Yet here was an over reliance on official sources built in to a system perceived to be a fair partnership between the military and the media and this study will return to that over-reliance and whether or not it was planned as a UK government media agenda-building strategy. It can be accepted that war reporting is generally weighted toward, and in favour of, the home nation since the media typically cover war from the point of view of the country in which they, and their major owners, viewers, listeners and readers are based, reflecting the point of view of that country's government and its foreign policy.

Therefore, in UK government's offer of embedded media status, compared with the unsatisfactory arrangements (from the media's point of view) in 1991, this bias would surely be enhanced, albeit unintentionally from the media's point of view. The media thought they had won more freedom to report and were, on the whole, free from censorship but the reliance was still on official sources under the guise of press freedom of access. Hamilton cites the fact that embedded reporters bonded with the troops and felt "uncomfortable" in portraying their military colleagues in an

[881] Sylvester & Huffman, p.148.

unfavourable light.[882] The BBC's Gavin Hewitt qualifies Hamilton's view by saying that his military colleagues accepted that if something happened which put them in an unfavourable light he (Hewitt) would have to report it. Yet he adds that the picture-driven coverage also needed a correspondent who could accurately interpret it.[883] The Cardiff University report on official/media relationships in the 2003 Iraq War also takes up Hewitt's point on interpretation of the images filed by embedded reporters and concludes that analysis of these images was restricted in its strategic view.

Newspaper photographer Joseph Giordano says the military got exactly what they wanted from the embedded system in terms of positive and admiring stories.[884] Whether or not this bias was deliberately built in to the embedded system programme or whether it arose by accident (as Colonel Paul Brook says "cock-up rather than conspiracy") will be returned to. However, it seems that evidence points to an element of "illusion" in the official offer of a military/media partnership which would on the face of it benefit both parties in terms of fair and objective reporting yet, in fact, benefitted one more than the other.

Reliance on "official sources" through the embedded media in Iraq 2003 aided the UK government's military and political agenda, it is contended, more than it did any truly objective coverage by the media. This is not only the conclusion of this dissertation but those of media and academic sources quoted here, including the BBC's Director of News and Current Affairs during the 2003 conflict, Richard Sambrook.

6.4. Media management and official disinformation

As previously outlined relationships between Prime Minister Anthony Eden and his Press Secretary William Clark moved to a breakdown state as the Suez Crisis

[882] Hamilton, p.33.
[883] Katovsky & Carlson, pp.313-315.
[884] Sylvester & Huffman, p.112.

escalated through the summer and autumn of 1956. This breakdown made it more difficult for Eden to structure a strategic media management policy. In addition, there was internal criticism from his Cabinet of which, through leaks, the Lobby correspondents were already aware.

Opposition to his own views within the government made Eden even more stubborn and determined to pursue his own media management strategy, which in effect relied solely on his briefing editors, senior correspondents and proprietors, as outlined by his own biographer Thorpe, Turner, Seymour-Ure, Monckton and others as well as William Clark himself in his diaries kept at the time and subsequent other works on the Suez Crisis.[885]

No British newspaper would wish to be placed in the position of not supporting, and possibly endangering, British troops once they were in action. Former Permanent Secretary at the MoD, Sir Frank Cooper, later admitted that psychological operations and propaganda had been used.[886] Mountbatten and Keightley, respectively the naval and military chiefs in *Operation Musketeer*, both took umbrage at government attempts after the withdrawal of the invading troops at Suez to justify, retrospectively through a pamphlet released to the media, the whole military adventure.[887]

Between Nasser's takeover of the Suez Canal on July 27th, 1956, and *Operation Musketee*r in late October, black propaganda broadcasts were made to seek to split off Egypt from other Arab states with disinformation raw material supplied by the embassy in Cairo. This was aimed at international media to expose Nasser's supposed ambitions to topple the old feudal states throughout the Middle East and take control of oil production for Egyptian ends and those of Egypt's supposed ally the Soviet Union.[888] Gorst and Kelly state that this propaganda initiative involved

[885] Thorpe, p.497, Turner, p.159, Seymour-Ure, p.125, Monckton Papers, Box 8, No. 217.
[886] SUEZOHP: 3 1989-91, p.6
[887] Mountbatten Papers, MB1/N109. General correspondence. 21 Jan 1957.
[888] Kelly & Gorst, p.15.

UK Cairo diplomat Ralph Murray, head of the Foreign Office's innocuously-named Information Research Department (IRD).[889] The IRD produced black propaganda designed to undermine Nasser by appealing for a return to constitutional rule.[890] Egyptian morale was targeted by the use of psychological and propaganda methods to attempt to separate Nasser and his government from the Egyptian population and this was an integral part of the military preparations for Operation Musketeer.[891] The IRD prepared articles for insertion into newspapers, magazines and journals and even then editors were reluctant to take them because of the lack of journalistic and editorial appeal.[892] Vaughan notes that the IRD then resorted to bribery to influence Middle East editors.[893]

Black propaganda may also have been used when the Foreign Office minister Tony Nutting resigned in protest at the Sèvres agreement. William Clark, in his diary, claims that he was asked by the Conservative Chief Whip's Office to give an *unattributable* briefing to the press to the effect that Nutting was "terribly under the influence of his American mistress and anyway was not quite himself nowadays". Clark, as a civil servant, replied that this was "the sort of thing the party did, not me".[894] It is, however, an unsubstantiated claim.

What is substantiated, however, is the attempted censorship by Eden in contemplating taking over the BBC, a fact denied by his own biographer Thorpe.[895] Yet this was substantiated from other sources such as William Clark who in a diary entry of August 16th 1956, noted that he had been at the Home Office for a meeting

[889] Chapman, p.214. Chapman describes the IRD at supplying Britain's media, including the BBC, with non-attributable material as part of a hearts and minds policy. In Iraq 2003 the equally-innocuously-named Coalition Information Centre, headed by Alastair Campbell, was based in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Part of its remit was to research and write articles against the Saddam Hussein regime which were then placed in international and UK media, again unattributable. I wrote several of them.
[890] Kelly & Gorst, pp.20-21.
[891] Gorst, Anthony, 'A Modern Major General: Sir Gerald Templar, Chief of the Imperial General Staff', in Kelly & Gorst, p.37.
[892] Vaughan, p.61.
[893] Vaughan, p.61.
[894] Clark, *From Three Worlds,* p.207, and Thorpe, p.562.
[895] Thorpe, p.499.

on censorship of the press and added: "I was struck with the extent to which the BBC was regarded as completely under government control".[896] As Shaw points out, the BBC was vulnerable to political pressure, as it was funded by a licence fee decided by the government of the day.[897] Further evidence of political pressure is evident from a meeting held on October 26th, 1956. The BBC's chairman of governors Cadogan and his Director General Sir Ian Jacob had met Deputy Prime Minister R. A. Butler to protest at the Government's threat to reduce the BBC's External Services Budget from £5m to £4m.[898] As Shaw states, and National Archives records examined in this dissertation clearly demonstrate, the timing of the proposed budget cut was intended to shock the BBC into following the government's line. Indeed, after this meeting the BBC was obliged by Butler to accept a Foreign Office official, in effect a censor, to "advise the BBC on the content and direction of their overseas programmes".[899] "To advise" here can certainly be interpreted as media management intended to channel the BBC into supporting the government's political agenda.

There was further Parliamentary media management pressure on the BBC, from Peter Rawlinson, on November 14th, 1956. Rawlinson, Conservative MP for Epsom and later Solicitor General and Attorney General in three successive Tory administrations, proposed a motion which said there had been a "widespread impression" that the BBC had not maintained its standards of impartiality over the crisis in the Middle East.[900] This could be construed as government blackmail since the government had the budgetary control to hand in terms of dealing with the BBC, through setting the licence fee as well as the grant-in-aid given to BBC External Services.

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[896] Clark Papers, Box 160 Downing Street Diary, 16th August, 1956, and Shaw, Tony, 'Cadogan's Last Fling', pp.138-9.
[897] Seaton, Jean & Curran, James, *Power with responsibility: The press, broadcasting and new media in Britain* (London: Fontana, 2003), p.170.
[898] Shaw, pp.138-9.
[899] Ibid.
[900] Lamb, p.237.

In terms of media management techniques, we can reflect on Eden's ignoring advice from Cabinet colleagues, ignoring his own press adviser, ignoring advice from his own military chiefs and producing a government media handling agenda which may have at the start of the Suez Crisis won domestic media support. However, this support was won without the media being aware of all the facts, especially those surrounding the Sèvres agreement. In this, and the involvement of Israel, Eden lied to the media and the nation. *The Times*, which had supported Eden from Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal, changed sides once hostilities had started. The newspaper felt it had been used by Eden all along through his confidential briefings of its editor Haley, and its foreign editor McDonald.[901] Eden's media management techniques, in other words, had short-term success only; his media agenda-building was linked to a political policy which had failed, resulting in the withdrawal of support by newspapers which had previously supported him.[902]

In 2003, media organisations opted for embedded status with the idea that it would give them an edge, providing facilities to get nearer the battlefront than they did in Iraq 1991. They may have thought that they could still preserve journalistic integrity but it can be argued that they were seduced by the hidden agenda of the UK government, an agenda that was founded on trying to make a case for an unpopular war, a case that differed from 1991 when the conflict had UN backing and was, ostensibly, to free an independent state, Kuwait, from foreign invasion. Indeed, in their study of media/military relationships Hess and Kalb underline that the embedded policy was adopted *because* the war <u>was</u> an unpopular one, compared to 1991, and that the public needed to see that information appeared to come independently through the media rather than official sources if public support

[901] Shaw, p.70.
[902] Moorcraft & Taylor, pp.74-75. The authors add that the Suez Crisis split Britain and its press in a way that overshadowed the division of the 2003 Iraq War.

was to be won.[903] American TV commentator Ted Koppel supports this contention that the war appeared to be "seen through the eyes of the journalists".[904]

In retrospect, in an interview with him, and in his own autobiography, the BBC's Middle East Editor Jeremy Bowen remarked that in the age of new, and instantaneous, transmission technology both government and media realised this fact but perhaps the media were more seduced by the siren song of apparently getting the battlefield access they were denied in 1991. From the government point of view, Bowen remarks that the best way the authorities could communicate with their supporters, and to win over new ones, was to get their version of what happened on to the airwaves, albeit through the mouths and cameras of the media since, from the government agenda building point of view, winning the information war was no longer incidental but was a top military priority".[905]

The embedded reporter structure gave just that advantage to the politicians and, it is contended, the system was deliberately employed by the UK and US military as a positive media agenda building policy, not as one to give the media better access to the battlefront, the access they had been denied in the 1991 war. It was an apparently open offer to the media but was, in fact, a media management technique, the Faustian bargain to which has previously been referred to in this study.

Still, there were moments of media management which were less than subtle, as the BBC's Ben Brown recounts. Brown clearly states that an Army briefer, Colonel Chris Vernon, had actually admitted that he wanted to try to use the media as a psychological weapon. Caroline Wyatt and Hilary Andersson also refer to the fact that isolated behind the front lines they relied on official sources for their information with the additional pressure of strict deadlines which militated against reflective

[903] Hess, Stephen & Kalb, Martin (eds), *The Media and the War on Terrorism* (Washington D.C: Brookings Press, 2003), p.12.
[904] Ibid.
[905] Bowen, Jeremy, *War Stories* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2006), p.112. Also Campbell, J.T. Interview with Jeremy Bowen.

analysis. Their BBC colleague Tim Franks makes it quite clear that his media "minder", Lt. Col Sean Tully, wanted the journalists to be part of their "information operations", that is to help the military deliver "a particular message to particular audiences", both in the UK and Iraq. Franks adds: "We were in Tully's words 'a tool, a weapon, a battle-winning asset'."[906] Yet journalists fell into this trap as the current BBC Defence Correspondent Caroline Wyatt later said when she recollected unconsciously switching into "military speak", during a live broadcast, referring to 'the RAF taking out targets' which led to an article in the *Independent* criticising her for not referring to civilians being killed.[907]

This was an honest mistake, freely acknowledged by Wyatt. However, in media management terms the UK military used disinformation as a media management tool. Reporter Peter Wilson gives the example of false information released to embedded journalists and broadcast - the story of a Shiite rising in Basra - which was praised on air by British deputy commander Major-General Peter Wall as "just the sort of encouraging indication we have been looking for". "Coalition officials later conceded to me privately that the uprising claim was a deliberate lie aimed at encouraging the real thing," Wilson said. [908] Other journalists criticised the embedded reporter system as being too close to the action and missing the big picture.[909]

What the embedded reporter system did was to put the excitement of instant TV into the main frame of 24-hour reporting of military action to the detriment of reporting on civilian casualties, the latter a fact which Chouliaraki refers to as the "politics of pity". Embedded reporting ostensibly carried an air of objectivity and of impartial observation. However, as Chouliaraki points out, the difference between propaganda and the politics of pity is also a difference in the nature of the public

[906] Franks, p.16.
[907] Campbell. Wyatt interview.
[908] Wilson, Peter, *Long Drive Through a Short War: Reporting on the Iraq War* (Victoria, Australia: Hardie Grant Books, 2004), p.25.
[909] Hamilton, p.31. Also in Hooper, p.51 who remarks that the camera cannot capture the broad panorama of action on its own; that is up to the reporter.

sphere that each mode of mediated communication appeals to.[910] In other words, by not showing images of "public suffering" and seeing the conflict mainly through the eyes of soldiers, the UK government avoided the "politics of pity" and, it is submitted, ventured into the world of propaganda. The spectator did not have the variety of images to be moved by the suffering and, indeed was fed military images which justified the war. CNN's Christiane Ammanpour remarked that the coalition troops wanted to be seen "as benefactors not just as bombers".[911]

This was, in fact, propaganda, albeit in its "white" form since what embedded reporters observed, in the main, was factual. Jowett and O'Donnell make the point that there is a need to evaluate propaganda in a contemporary context, free from value-laden definitions and to analyse propaganda as part of the political system.[912] Ellul makes a similar point when he points to the great uncertainty about propaganda, adding that it is usually regarded as "evil" and the dissemination of information by means of lies.[913] We can surely then acknowledge that the concept of embedded media was a form of "white propaganda" if we accept that what was written or transmitted by that media was in the main factual and true, albeit emerging from a restricted, and UK government and military controlled system to forward the UK's political and military aims.

Embedded reporters were a part of this media management system; Robert Marett, with his 50 years of experience in media management, said it all when he remarked that the best way to employ propaganda was to "Get someone else to do it for you". Jowett and O'Donnell make the same point in that identity concealment is often necessary for the propagandist to achieve desired objectives and goals.[914] That is what the embedded reporting system did since it amended what was perceived by

[910] Chouliaraki, Lilie, ' The aestheticization of suffering on television', *Visual Communication* (Vol. 5, No. 3, 2006), p.265.
[911] Ibid, p.264.
[912] Jowett, Garth S. & O'Donnell, Victoria, *Propaganda and Persuasion* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 1999), p.2.
[913] Ellul, Jacques, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Random House, 1968), p.x.
[914] Jowett & O'Donnell, p.42.

the media to be a failed media handling strategy in 1991 into one which was accepted by them in 2003. In reality it handed the UK, and US authorities, a potent propaganda tool.

This was admitted by Air Marshal Burridge, commander of British forces in the Gulf, who later said that he felt ambiguous about the decision to attach journalists to the troops. "Experienced journalists see very localised action and it is a pinprick…what has gone wrong is that the television news programmes don't have the ability to lay a strategic overview."[915] Seib concurs with this view when he noted that real-time media may also lend itself to disinformation – the purposeful dissemination for policy-related purposes, of information known to be false.[916] Hammond adds that the coalition's obvious intention to generate good PR simply confirmed that the war's presentation was carefully calculated and manipulative.[917]

As Taleb points out, it was in fact the opposite of UK government agenda-building policy in the Kurdish humanitarian crisis of 1991 (and, one could contend, in the breakdown of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia) where the media framed the emphasis on human suffering and tragedy, prompting world leading countries to apply for (and support) military intervention.[918] Here, the "politics of pity" worked against the perceived aggressors and in the Kurdish crisis it was Western TV pictures of Kurdish refugees fleeing from Iraqi persecution that led British Prime Minister John Major to suggest the creation of a "no-fly zone" to provide air cover to protect a safe haven for the refugees. As Moorcraft and Taylor reflect, this was an example of pictures prompting a policy decision.[919]

In this "politics of pity" context, General Sir Rupert Smith, then working on policy matters in the Ministry of Defence in 1993 as Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (ACDS), refers to the "persuasiveness of contextual reporting." He admitted that his

[915] Tumber & Palmer, p.26.
[916] Seib, p.14.
[917] Hammond, Philip, *Media, War and Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 2007), p.66.
[918] Taleb, p.113.
[919] Moorcraft & Taylor, p.244.

personal analysis of media reports on the war situation in Bosnia and the effects on the civilian population helped to give him a coherent picture on which he could then offer military advice to the politician, prompting a "something must be done" state of mind.[920] This was particularly important since the United Nations Protecting Force (UNPROFOR) was failing to achieve its stated purpose in providing safety for refugees and it was as a result of, what General Smith describes as "harrowing pictures on the TV screens" that there was growing pressure on politicians to take some more effective action.[921] That action resulted in NATO deciding to police the area by air in *Operation Deny Flight*, denying the Serbs air access and reducing their capacity to attack mainly Muslim civilian targets in Bosnia.

So, the "politics of pity" had worked for the UK and its allies in the Kurdish and Bosnian crises and it may have led the UK political machinery to realise that in Iraq 2003 it could not afford to have that same policy used against it, prompting the apparently more media friendly policy of embedded reporting but a policy which, in reality, gave more military and political control of media output.

6.5.Media agenda building strategy: The lessons of Suez

For Prime Minister Sir Anthony Eden media agenda building to support his policy over Suez should not have been difficult since, in general and certainly in 1956, the British national newspaper system provided more support for right-of-centre politicians than it did for these in the centre and left. At the time of Suez, the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mirror* were among the few national newspapers on the left while the *Daily Telegraph, The Times, Daily Mail and Daily Express* were on the right.[922]

[920] Smith, p.340.
[921] Smith, p.340.
[922] Donsbach, Wolfgang & Patterson, Thomas, 'Partnership, Professionalism and Political Roles in Five Countries', in Esser & Pfetsch, p.256.

Good advice can be a brake on bad judgement, especially in handling the media, but by this time Eden had lost faith in his Press Secretary William Clark who earlier in the crisis had played a shrewd hand in keeping the BBC and the new commercial Independent Television News (ITN) on side. On July 31, 1956, Clark had given confidential briefings to the BBC's Sir Ian Jacob and ITN editor Geoffrey Cox, the latter reflecting that Clark had assured them the government meant business. Clark had used his own authority as press spokesman to make an unattributable statement to the two powerful media chiefs, convincing Cox that Eden was intent on action. This was reflected in ITN's coverage which fulfilled Eden's plan of making it clear to Nasser that he was not bluffing, Shaw adds, quoting Cox's later memoirs.[923]

Eden's own biographer Thorpe admits that the prime minister's approach to media agenda-building was more tactical than strategic; Eden was well aware that prime ministers could be toppled and that it was media pressure which eventually led to the resignation of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain early in the Second World War. It was this media pressure he (Eden) wished to avoid and which led him to put extraordinary pressure on the BBC to slavishly follow the government line over Suez, even to the extent that he was of a mind to nationalise the BBC, if we are to believe this allegation, contained in the diary of his press secretary William Clark.

In his eagerness to force the support of the BBC, he did not recognise that the Corporation had a more strategic view of events then he himself did. It had a charter which expressly laid down its way of operating. Kenneth Lamb, Director of Public Affairs for the BBC during the Suez Crisis and a member of the BBC's Board of Management, underlined the BBC External Service's high reputation for objectivity, an objectivity Eden was attempting to modify, if not overturn. Commenting in the *Report of the Independent Committee of Enquiry into the Overseas Information Services, April 1954*, to which he gave evidence, Lamb stressed that this reputation had to be maintained at all costs and that the BBC

[923] Shaw, pp.108-109

would deplore any attempt to use it for "direct propaganda of the most obvious kind". He added that the "best and most effective propaganda to many countries consists of a factual presentation of the news and of British views concerning the news".[924] This was not a view with which Eden acquiesced since he wanted the BBC as a government political organ in the way it had been during the Second World War, ignoring the fact that in this conflict the British nation was united in a "justified" war against an external aggressor and in defence of an international treaty protecting the independence of Poland. In Suez, the nation was deeply split over whether or not there should be military action to regain control of the Suez Canal; the role of the BBC in both these conflicts was entirely different with propaganda against Germany and her allies being regarded as a legitimate ploy, not a situation acceptable to the BBC over Suez.

Within the Eden administration there was also opposition to propaganda over Suez. His First Sea Lord Earl Mountbatten took offence at government propaganda attempts not only during the crisis, but also after Eden had resigned, when the government attempted to put out a pamphlet justifying the actions over Suez. In a letter to General Keightley, Commander in Chief during *Operation Musketeer* and now at MoD, Mountbatten said that the pamphlet was "political instead of factual." Keightley replied that the pamphlet had been withdrawn, mainly due to pressure by Dr Charles Hill, the new Postmaster General and minister in charge of government publicity.[925] Hill was to be the impetus in changing government media-handling policy and amending government agenda-building strategy.

This needed amending since there was no real strategic media agenda building strategy in Eden's plans, other than personal talks to editors and the use of propaganda. As Negrine notes in his treatise on political communication,

[924] Lamb, Kenneth, 'Disclosure, Discretion and Dissemblement: Broadcasting and the National Interest in the Perspective of a Publicly Owned Media', in Franck & Weisband (eds), p.234.
[925] Mountbatten Papers, MB1/N109. General correspondence. 21 Jan 1957.

governments have to use carefully crafted communications strategies to ensure they get "good press" for their policies.[926]

In 1956, although Eden did not face the problem of dealing with the satellite and internet age and 24-hour reporting as the governments did during the Iraq 2003 conflict, at least he recognised that something had to be done when in the immediate aftermath of the crisis when he appointed Charles Hill as a cabinet minister, with the brief of revising the government's information services.[927] Hill was scathing about the lack of guidance given to government spokesmen by the Eden administration. He said that despite the lack of success in government media handling during Suez, in his restructuring of government communications he still found ministerial colleagues suspicious of anyone talking to the media.[928]

He was particularly critical of the presentation of the UK Suez case overseas. For example, a previous section has referred to the connection between the *Daily Express* and its foreign editor Sefton Delmer, who was seconded by the newspaper to Egypt to the UK government-funded *Arab News Agency's* office in Cairo. This was in fact a propaganda front and, recognising this, the Egyptians threw Delmer out of the country in August 2006.

However, as well as criticising the overseas presentation of the UK's Suez case, Hill pointed to the lack of access by press office professionals to their ministers and the perception by permanent officials of press officers as a "necessary evil".[929] Indeed, Seymour-Ure maintains that until the 1990s "British governments had a hostility towards a single media ministry or a single set of strategic national media goals" adding that previous to this UK government media policies were generally uncoordinated and reactive[930] It is an interesting point and may indicate that the

[926] Negrine, Ralph, *The Communication of Politics* (London: Sage, 1996), p.10.
[927] Shaw, p.195
[928] Hill, p.179.
[929] Hill, p.185.
[930] Seymour-Ure, Colin, *The British Press and Broadcasting since 1945* (London: Blackwell, 1996), p.228.

revision of the government's information services by Charles Hill was still meeting with internal opposition nearly forty years later.

Suez showed that Britain could no longer engage in this scale of unilateral action against another sovereign country without seeking the support of the United States.[931] William Clark, in his 1974 essay, put it succinctly when commenting on the lessons future Prime Ministers could learn from Suez: "One cannot successfully lead the country into a military adventure without preparing public opinion."[932] And to reach the public and mould public opinion, this does involve a successful media agenda building policy which brings the media on side. Foreign Office Minister Anthony Nutting, who resigned over Eden's Suez policy, said that the affair had been 'no end of a lesson' for British policy-makers, not least in the realm of public persuasion where it exposed the dangers of allowing propaganda to outpace policy.[933] In contrast, in Iraq 2003 the embedded reporter system, the concentration on military operations and not on civilian casualties had won not only internal UK support but, by 4 April 2003 when the Allied troops had taken 80 per cent of Baghdad airport, Middle East support through Abu Dhabi TV and the BBC World Service Arabic Service, Alastair Campbell noted.[934] Also, in his entry for the day he noted that "we also had some good Iraqi exiles who were able to talk about the regime far more convincingly than we could."[935] This illustrates one of Robert Marett's principles for propaganda that you can be more convincing it you get someone else to tell the story for you, a third party endorsement so to speak. Tony Blair, in his autobiography, refers obliquely, if not specifically, on the work of the Coalition Information Centre (CIC) in that a hard power strategy alone would not work in engaging the people out in the Middle East, in the Muslim world, and had to build alliances within that world.[936] The CIC produced "white propaganda" or public

[931] Boyle, p.564. Clark, *From Three Worlds*, p.214.
[932] Franck & Weisband, p.216. Also in Parmentier's study of the British press during Suez, p.447, where he underlines that Suez was a failure in terms of public relations which, in a democratic country, constitute an essential element of a government's policy.
[933] Shaw, p.195.
[934] Campbell, A., *Countdown to Iraq*, p.534.
[935] Ibid.
[936] Blair, p.409.

diplomacy which showed the dark side of the Saddam regime and its persecution of those, such as Shia clerics and Kurds, who opposed the regime, in order to win hearts and minds in these key areas.[937]

However, if the Blair government had drawn internal and external support for military action, the same was not the case in Suez 1956. Even the most fervent media friends of a government may turn against that government if lied to. Eden lied to fellow government members, to Parliament, to the media and to the people over the Protocol of Sevres and the involvement of Israel in the secret agreement to invade Egypt. As a result, *The Times*, which had supported Eden from Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal, changed sides once hostilities had started. The newspaper felt it had been used by Eden all along through his confidential briefings of its editor Haley, and its foreign editor McDonald.[938]

Although much has been written about the 1956 Suez crisis, exposing the failures of Eden, there are still government records which remain classified and which, when examined by future researchers when they are eventually released, may shed an even greater light on the affair. Still, what is available at the National Archives, and from the personal papers of figures such as Monckton and Mountbatten, does give a deep insight into the internal malfunctions of the Eden administration. In the cases of the Iraq 1991 and 2003 conflicts no official papers, such as Cabinet documents, are as yet available and until they are researchers have to look elsewhere for information.

Seib maintains that the lack of analysis in the coverage of the Iraq 2003 conflict was not the fault of journalists on the ground since they only had a tiny piece of the war on which to concentrate. He identifies the problem as belonging the upper ranks of the news organisations where producers and editors became so infatuated with the drama being delivered by the embeds that they overused that to the exclusion of

[937] Campbell, A., *The Burden of Power,*p.73.
[938] Shaw, p.70.

less gripping but more important stories.[939] SHAPE chief spokesman Mark Laity, academic Philip Knightley, current BBC Defence Correspondent Caroline Wyatt and John Robertson, in his examination of Scottish newspapers' coverage of the conflict and others all testify to the narrow focus of media reliance on embedded coverage to the detriment of analysis. Seib makes the pertinent point that combat is only part of war; the rest is politics, diplomacy, economics, and other dry sciences.[940] To take in all of these aspects in comprehensive and broad spectrum media coverage, the choice lay in the hands of the editors and other executives.

In the lead-up to the actual outbreak of military action, Prime Minister Tony Blair used other methods to strengthen his political agenda and justify military action. This included the setting up of a unit nominally in his No. 10 office but physically situated in a basement in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on the other side of Downing Street. This unit, the Coalition Information Centre (CIC), headed by Blair's Director of Communications Alastair Campbell, researched any material which could discredit Saddam Hussein and produced articles which could be published in the media, in particular the Islamic media team were successful on the public diplomacy front.[941]

Also, the government did not neglect to use on-line news, not only from the websites of No.10, the Cabinet Office and the MoD, but also through press releases to try to influence favourable coverage on media websites, reaching domestic audiences and those abroad. Best *et al*, in their examination of on-line news during the conflict with Iraq, point out that for the BBC news websites, more than 50 per cent of the on-line traffic originated from outside the United Kingdom.[942] This is a tribute to the objectivity and coverage of the BBC as CBS reporter Sarah Dodd and media researchers Christian Christensen, Melissa Wall and Douglas Bicket and

[939] Seib, p.60.
[940] Seib, p.60.
[941] Campbell, A., *Countdown to Iraq*, p.534
[942] Best, Samuel J., Chmielewski, Brian & Krueger, Brian S., 'Selective Exposure to Online Foreign News During the Conflict with Iraq', *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* (Vol. 10, No. 4, 2005), p.54.

Jowett and O'Donnell all note, comparing the American coverage of Fox as unashamedly one-sided. This may also reflect on a more professional and balanced output by the UK government's news organisation and a realisation that to play the overtly "patriotic card" would not work in the UK as it would in the USA, particularly in the run-up to what was seen as an unpopular war.

Also in the lead-up to the actual conflict the UK government did have a media agenda-building advantage with surveys showing that 51 per cent of newspaper readers in Britain read a newspaper which shares their political leanings.[943] With a majority of the UK national newspapers showing support for the government's possible military action against Saddam, that did ease pressures on the government's attempts to seek positive supportive newspaper coverage. Even the *Mirror*, which opposed the war, was forced to tone down its attacks as readers turned away, according to Greenslade because "*Mirror* readers do not revel in criticism of the government in time of conflict".[944] In addition, Tulloch point outs out in his study how weak and marginal the press is in opposing the executive actions of a determined British prime minister, and the comparative effectiveness of the official news management strategy.[945] This is an aspect also highlighted by Esser and Pfetsch in their work on political communication where they contrast the struggle between a government and the media for the news advantage They make the point that government efforts to orchestrate news coverage have become more sophisticated and successful, leaving journalists struggling to assert their independence in a style of political news that is more adversarial and disdainful of politicians.[946]

In this struggle to dominate the news agenda in the 2003 Iraq conflict it is suggested that the UK government recognised the media pool system in the 1991 war had created media anger and therefore introduced the embedded media

[943] Best et al, p.56.
[944] Greenslade, p.661.
[945] Tulloch, John, 'The Daily Mirror and the invasions of Egypt (1956) and Iraq (2003), *Journalism Studies* ((Vol. 8, No. 1, 2007), p.46.
[946] Esser & Pfetsch, p.53.

system to persuade the media that they (the government) were bowing to media pressure and were openly offering access to battle areas which was not the case in 1991. This dissertation uses with caution "conspired to offer" since, we have no current access to any government records on the 2003 conflict under the 30-year rule. Future research when records are published may reveal that embedded reporting was, in fact, a government conspiracy to support the Blair government's agenda of regime change.

Switching to the actual media handling and military briefing operation in the conflict area, more than 100 media reservists were called up with secondary roles to act as media operators when needed.[947] A number of these were members of the Media Operations Group (V), Territorial Army media specialists whose civilian jobs were in newspapers, radio, television or public relations the idea being that they knew and understood the journalistic trade and could, it was hoped, form productive links with the media covering the build-up to the actual conflict. These specialists were in uniform, which the media preferred.

The key difference between Iraq 1991 and Iraq 2003 was the sheer volume of action footage which, as many of the sources quoted here point out, left less room for studio analysis. For example, BBC World presenter Nik Gowing refers to this instantaneous action coverage as "the tyranny of real-time" which creates an immense political problem for the British government. Gowing, who made this statement in a lecture in May 2004, was referring to events reported post conflict in Iraq when there was much more time for media analysis and reflection, unlike during the actual conflict itself.[948] The fixed and unwittingly blinkered focus of embedded reporting (like looking at an elephant through a straw, as previously mentioned) gave some government control of that "tyranny" by showing favourable images of "our boys" doing their job for Queen and Country.

[947] Tumber & Palmer, p.65
[948] Gowing, Nik, Media, the Law and Peace-building: from Bosnia and Kosovo to Iraq', *The Alistair Berkley Memorial Lecture* (London: London School of Economics, May, 2004).

Yet there was a section of the media which escaped the embrace of the controlled embedded journalist environment. For example, Defence Minister Geoff Hoon, quoted in the *Times* of 29 March, 2003, criticised the Middle East TV station a*l-Jazeera,* Hoon said had shown "unhelpful" television footage which could have involved civilian casualties or the degrading treatment of prisoners. The station claimed that these pictures showed the reality of war, leaving Hoon to retort that "instant pictures" could mislead" and fail to convey the "big picture". He concluded: "Free media access does not always equate to a balanced picture reaching the viewer or reader."[949]

This was an unwise statement from a government media agenda-building point of view since, in effect, he was criticising his own government's policy on embedded reporting. It was this embedded reporting which was producing these same "instant pictures" in order to boost UK agenda building and win support from the media (by its broadcast coverage) and from the public (who watched that output). Instant pictures of military action, and avoiding the "politics of pity" which come with the exposure of civilian casualties, was exactly what the UK government's embedded media programme was all about having learned the lesson of the unpopular media poll system in 1991.

The embedded media system suited the UK government because it gave that vital element of control without appearing to have the censorship grip which was implicit in the 1991 media pool system. In 2003, the media fell into the real-time television trap which had boosted audience ratings although the BBC's then Director of News and Current Affairs Richard Sambrook said that some of the BBC audience complained that there was "too much live coverage from the front for them to really understand what was happening".[950] Current BBC Political Editor Nick Robinson, reflecting on the Iraq 2003 conflict, reflected: "Looking back, I fear that TV had proved, as it so often does, to be the best medium to capture drama and release

[949] Dickie, John, *The New Mandarins: How British Foreign Policy Works* (London: I.B Tauris, 2004), p.211.
[950] Sambrook, Richard, in Beck & Downing (eds), p.16.

emotion but not good enough at the marshalling of facts and cool analysis the build-up to war merited."[951]

This lack of analysis extended to the actual outbreak of fighting and Sambrook's point on too much live coverage is picked up by Paul and Kim on their analysis of the embedded reporter system when they stated that the public had a right to know and had a right to know in a timely fashion. However, the public service roles claimed by the press were not being well served by real-time coverage of events which provided what could be seem as picture-led entertainment or "infotainment" lacking sufficient analysis by the media, which was certainly not in the public interest.[952] This is a crucial finding which can also be interpreted to mean that the real-time coverage provided a distraction in the guise of being a service to the public, thus covertly being used as a propaganda tool by a government without being perceived as such by the media or the public.

In an interview with him, one of the key planners of the embedded reporter system Colonel Paul Brook said that this propaganda aspect was never discussed in the planning stage and the "propaganda" effect of the embedded reporter coverage, more action to the detriment of analysis, was more "cock-up than conspiracy". This dissertation would dispute this view on the evidence collected, but the research here lacks the definitive proof which scrutiny of the minutes of contemporary government meetings would show. Again, this is an avenue future researchers will wish to explore when official documents outlining the planning process on the embedded reporting scheme become available.

Nevertheless, evidence in this dissertation would suggest that the embedded journalist scheme worked more for the UK government and military since it actually made the journalists unwittingly, in most cases, subscribe to the political establishment. The live action material sent back from the front line was motivating

[951] Robinson, p.287.
[952] Paul, Christopher & Kim, James J., *'Reporters on the Battlefield: The Embedded Press System in a Historical Context* (Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation, 2004).

the professional skills of the journalist at the battle front, exciting the creativity of the editors in the studio, attracting greater attention of the viewers at home, and satisfying the profit margins of the owners of the commercial media such as Sky and newspaper groups. Everybody appeared to benefit by this mutual partnership of military and media, in contrast to Iraq 1991 and, going further back to the Vietnam War where, as Hooper points out, the military bureaucracy failed to realise the importance of providing the media with facilities to follow the military situation and their regarding of the press as a necessary evil. Here, too, journalists were whisked into the battle area and then whisked out again with their material and many of them had no real conception of what war was really like for the troops. The bond was never made between military and media as it was in the embedded programme, a bond which journalists have admitted may have affected their objectivity. [953]

The UK government had learned from the 1991 experience and media dissatisfaction with it. Mark Laity, who has seen both sides, as a BBC reporter in 1991 and at a NATO spokesman in 2003, admits that the embedded reporter system benefitted the politicians. He stated: “The grammar of TV, the grammar of journalism requires that the story comes from the place where the smoke is thickest.”[954] In other words, it was the whiz-bang action provided by the embedded reporters in the front line, which dominated the TV coverage at the expense of the bigger picture and a more detailed analysis. This more detailed exposure of the “bigger picture” probably would not have supported the government’s embedded reporter line which showed a scientific, military conflict mainly devoid of the civilian death and destruction. A constant media exposure of these latter grim aspects of war, the “politics of pity”, could well have prompted a change the views of UK TV and radio audiences and newspaper readers from support into opposition.

[953] Hooper, p.113.
[954] Campbell, J.T. Interview with Mark Laity 14, August 2007..

Despite the long history of war reporting, questions continue to be raised about graphic reality and softened depictions, objectivity and patriotism, and many more issues that affect the quality of coverage. During the 2003 Iraq war the news media would find their work shaped by new technology, new procedures and, for many, a new relationship with the military, but they would still keep looking for answers to basic questions about what war journalism should be.[955]

On the whole, the embedded media system was of more benefit to the UK government than was the media pool system in 1991. Most of the action in 1991 was conducted over the 42 days from the air, with journalists denied access to planes and the reality of the horror (of war) on the whole was kept secret. In contrast, during the 2003 conflict, journalists freely accepted access to the "frontlines" and those frontline images. Keeble notes that material from these journalists, who were clearly risking their lives, aimed to seduce the viewer/reader and capture their attention; yet beyond the view of the camera and the journalist eyewitness the essential nature of the conflict lay all the more subtly and effectively hidden.[956] It was hidden because of the reliance on official sources by the media and media management as a hidden agenda by the military. In addition, the images produced by the embedded media system played into the hands of a UK government political and military structure which, as Maltby points out, needed to generate and sustain the vital support of the public through the perception management which the embedded system delivered.[957] The UK public perceived the war through the eyes of the embedded media as a military war between armed forces because that is what the images and lack of analysis showed. Certainly the growth of the Arab networks, such as *al-Jazeera*, and the internet showed the horrors of civilian casualties, as previously indicated in this study, but this was not the dominant picture put in front of the British public. Instead, the media coverage was, it is suggested, mainly perceived by the UK domestic audience to be free of

[955] Seib, p.41.
[956] Keeble, Richard, 'Information warfare in an age of hyper-militarism', in Allan & Zelizer (eds), pp.49.50.
[957] Maltby, p.3.

political control as seen through the eyes of the embedded media and without obvious political or military control, what Nye describes as "soft power".

Nye, in highlighting the importance of "soft power" in war, refers to the management of news to reduce unfavourable perceptions. Rigid censorship is not always the answer, he adds, and embedding reporters with forward military units limited Saddam Hussein's ability to create international outrage by claiming that civilians were being deliberately killed. Unlike the first Gulf War, when *CNN* framed the issues, the diffusion of information technology and the rise of new outlets such as *al-Jazeera* needed a new strategy and that new strategy was through embedding reporters in the front line units.[958] It amended the UK's media agenda-building strategy from one which created media opposition and dissent to one which was freely accepted and which gave a greater advantage to the government in the pursuance of its political and military aims.

The "independent endorsement" within the Middle East and non-aligned nations was mainly absent in the case of the UK in both the Suez and the Iraq 2003 conflicts. Faisal Bodi, speculating on the Iraq 2003 conflict, says the Arab media were possibly alone in depicting the war as an act devoid of international legal sanction".[959] On a broader point Seib states that in his analysis of war reporting he found "systemic flaws in how the news business works, particularly in terms of breadth and depth of coverage".[960] He goes on to highlight controversy in the West when *al-Jazeera* showed Iraqi government-provided footage of dead and captured Coalition troops, a view defended by the station's editor-in-chief Ibrahim Hilal as showing the reality of war and asking the viewer to "judge whether war is the most suitable way to solve problems".[961] Tumber and Palmer refer to the difference between the traditional Arab language media being directly subordinate to the

[958] Nye, Joseph S. Jr, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), pp.49-50.
[959] Bodi, Faisal, 'Al Jazeera's War', in Miller, David (ed), *Tell me lies: Propaganda and Media Distortion in the Attack on Iraq* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), p.244.
[960] Seib, Philip, *Beyond the Front Lines: How the News Media Cover a World Shaped by War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.xi.
[961] Ibid, p.108.

political system of the country in which each individual media is based, an output dominated by "protocol news" coming directly from the Ministry of Information or official news agency of that country and stations such as *al-Jazeera* which do not accept "protocol news" in the same way as established Arab broadcasters.[962]

Independent endorsement from most Arab and non-aligned nations may have been lost in the 1956 and 2003 conflicts and this loss was key to UK government media agenda building. The start of any political party attempting to get into government is surely its principles; then the goals are outlined to bring these principles into operation and a strategy is planned to link the two. Agenda building encompasses all three to win friends and influence people and to secure more time – a second or third term in office which is the prime aim of any political party in power. Defending these themes above, and politics as a whole, Professor Sir Bernard Crick remarks that in contrast to tyranny and oligarchy the "political method of rule is to listen to these other groups [other than their own] so as to conciliate them as far as possible".[963]

As previously mentioned, Sir Robert Marett, who was involved in producing British government propaganda for over 50 years from World War 1, set out three rules for success:

- Have the right friends in the right places
- Provide services which fill a need
- Whenever possible, do not conduct the propaganda yourself, but get a national of the country to do it for you.[964]

Replacing the word "propaganda", which nowadays has a pejorative meaning, with "agenda building" or "public diplomacy", it seems that Marett's three rules had been

[962] Tumber, Howard & Palmer, Jerry, *Media at War: The Iraq Crisis* (London: Sage Publications, 2004), p.130.
[963] Crick, Bernard, *In Defence of Politics* (Chippenham: Anthony Rowe, 2005),p.4.
[964] Marett, p.58.

met in Iraq 2003 since embedded reporters on the whole admitted that they had become friendly with their military protectors. Secondly the military provided the services – protection, accessibility, film opportunities on a 24-hour a day basis the hungry media required. Thirdly, the agenda building to win public support came from the "independent" media and was not ostensibly produced by the military, independent endorsement in other words. Palmer, in his review of several publications analysing media reporting of the 2003 War, makes a point very similar to Marett's when he says that there is a reorientation of "propaganda" away from the model where control over the entire communications chain means that the propagandist can dominate the news flow to the public. Instead, modern theories of propaganda concentrate on the ways in which governments influence the communications process by intervening in the relationship between the journalist and the event the journalist reports.[965]

Richard Sambrook the BBC's Head of News in 2003, admitted that embedded reporting was only one part of reporting conflict in that it provided journalists with the access they wanted and that independent analysis was needed to balance the pictures. However, he added that stemming from an incident in the Kosovo conflict where NATO wanted one incident covered but the media had access to another incident and had the pictures to lead the news with that incident, NATO spokesman Jamie Shea concluded that if you controlled the pictures you controlled the narrative.[966] The picture-led aspect of embedded reporting was this intervention in the relationship between the journalist and the event the journalist reports that fits Palmer's propaganda model.

By amending its media agenda building strategy in the Iraq 2003 conflict to bring in embedded reporting the UK government had successfully made that intervention. In contrast, Eden failed both in Marett's three rules and also in Palmer's propaganda model. He certainly had the right friends in the right places in the media in the build-

[965] Palmer, p.382.
[966] Campbell, J.T. Interview with Richard Sambrook.

up to military action in Suez but ultimately he failed to hold on to that support when that supporting media realised that they had been lied to. Eden also failed to provide the services which filled the need for agenda building, primarily in dismissing the professional media advice from William Clark and taking on the role of briefing the media himself. In addition he had lost the internal support from key figures such as Lord Mountbatten, Harold Macmillan and Anthony Nutting. On Marett's third point Eden certainly had the support of the bulk of the UK media in the lead up to military action in Suez and they held to the government line, call it propaganda, agenda-building or public diplomacy. Thereafter the support leaked away and there was little third-party endorsement for his regime-change policy

As for Palmer's view, the relationship between Eden and the media had broken down leaving Eden unable to intervene effectively in the relationships between the journalist and the events he reports.

So, in comparing the agenda-building actions of Eden and Blair in their attempts to regime change, there was Eden who at the beginning of the Suez crisis had gained the support of most of the media, including the left-wing *Daily Mirror,* seeing that support leak away in the lead-up to military action. In contrast, you have Blair facing substantial media and public opposition to military action in Iraq but, through a sustained and effective government agenda-building policy gaining support for military action and, when that action took place with the invasion of Iraq, consolidating that support through an embedded reporter system which did his work for him, his propaganda conducted through a third and, apparently, objective media party.

Marett's third point had worked for Blair as had Palmer's propaganda model. Blair had successfully got the media to, albeit unconsciously, adopt his agenda-building policy as their own.

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